DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 479 530 CS 512 338

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TITLE	Reading in the Twentieth Century.
INSTITUTION	Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, Ann Arbor, MI.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2000-08-00
NOTE	46p.; CIERA Archive #01-08.
CONTRACT	R305R70004
AVAILABLE FROM	CIERA/University of Michigan, 610 E. University Ave., 1600 SEB, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259. Tel: 734-647-6940; Fax: 734-763-1229. For full text: http://www.ciera.org/library/archive/ 2001-08/0108pdp.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Educational History; *Educational Practices; Futures (of Society); Instructional Materials; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Processes; *Reading Research; Reading Skills; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS	*Reading Theories

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses reading instruction in the 20th century. The paper begins with a tour of the historical pathways that have led people, at the century's end, to the "rocky and highly contested terrain educators currently occupy in reading pedagogy." After the author/educator unfolds his version of a map of that terrain in the paper, he speculates about pedagogical journeys that lie ahead in a new century and a new millennium. Although the focus is reading pedagogy, the paper seeks to connect the pedagogy to the broader scholarly ideas of each period. According to the paper, developments in reading pedagogy over the last century suggest that it is most useful to divide the century into thirds, roughly 1900-1935, 1935-1970, and 1970-2000. The paper states that, as a guide in constructing a map of past and present, a legend is needed, a common set of criteria for examining ideas and practices in each period--several candidates suggest themselves, such as the dominant materials used by teachers in each period and the dominant pedagogical practices. It also suggests other important points of comparison, such as the role of the teacher and the learner in the process of learning to read, which lie beneath the instructional surface and require deeper inferences, greater interpretation, and more unpacking for observation and analysis. The paper contends that, for each set of practices, the most difficult task will be to understand the underlying assumptions about the "nature of reading and learning to read" that motivate dominant practices in each period. (Contains 1 table and 128 notes.) (NKA)

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ED 479 530

READING IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY[1]

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This is an account of reading instruction in the twentieth century. It will end, as do most essays written in the final year of any century, with predictions about the future. My hope is to provide an account of the past and present of reading instruction that will render predictions about the future transparent. Thus I begin with a tour of the historical pathways that have led us, at century's end, to the rocky and highly contested terrain we currently occupy in reading pedagogy. After unfolding my version of a map of that terrain, I will speculate about pedagogical journeys that lie ahead of us in a new century and a new millennium.

Even though the focus of this essay is reading pedagogy, it is my hope to connect the pedagogy to the broader scholarly ideas of each period. Two factors render this task easier for the first two-thirds of the century than for the last third. First, the sheer explosion in the number of educational ideas and movements in the last thirty years makes these connections more difficult. Second, because I have lived through this last third as a member of the reading profession, I am too close to examine current practices with the critical eye of historical distance. That realization, of course, compels me to work harder at the contextualization and to be as open and as comprehensive as possible in considering alternative explanations of recent events in the history of reading instruction.

The developments in reading pedagogy over the last century suggested that it is most useful to divide the century into thirds, roughly 1900–1935, 1935–1970, and 1970–2000. This division yields two periods of enormous intellectual and curricular activity (the first and third) and a relatively quiet period at mid-century.

To guide us in constructing our map of past and present, we will need a legend, a common set of criteria for examining ideas and practices in each period. Several candidates suggest themselves. Surely, the *dominant materials* used by teachers in each period will be relevant, as will the *dominant pedagogical practices*. Both materials and pedagogy are relatively easy to witness because they lie on the surface of instruction where they are easy to see. Other important points of comparison, such as the *role* of the *teacher* and the *learner* in the process of learning to read, lie beneath the instructional surface and require deeper inferences, greater interpretation, and more unpacking for observation and analysis. Finally, for each set of practices, the most difficult task will be to understand the underlying assumptions about the *nature of reading* and *learning to read* that motivate dominant practices in each period.

The Reading Scene at Last Turn of the Century

The rhetoric of the reformers of the mid and late nineteenth century, intellectual giants such as Horace Mann and Colonel Francis Parker,[2] would lead us to conclude that the demons of drill and practice on isolated sounds and letters had been driven out of our pedagogical temples by the year 1900. So strong was their indictment, so appealing their alternative methods of reason and meaning, that one could hardly imagine the continuation of a method as painful to both student and teacher alike as was the alphabetic approach. Yet in spite of the wonderful accounts of

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CS 512 338

innovative language experience activities and integrated curriculum in the laboratory schools at Columbia and the University of Chicago,[3] alphabetic approaches still dominated the educational landscape in the United States at least through World War I. These were classic synthetic phonics approaches (learn the parts before the whole) in which, at least in the earliest stages of learning to read, students encountered, in rapid succession, letter names, then letter sounds, then syllable blending activities that were organized into tight drill and practice sequences. The synthetic phonics traditions established much earlier in the century by Noah Webster's *Blue Back Speller* and McGuffey's *Eclectic Readers* were still strongly in evidence.[4] Once the code had been cracked, students were expected to move right into works of literature, most of which were written for adults rather than children. Drill and practice continued after the primer level, but moved from letter names and sounds into other aspects of the language arts, including grammar, rhetoric, and elocution.

Taking Stock: I

The role of the learner in this period was to receive the curriculum provided by the teacher and dutifully complete the drills provided. The role of the teacher was to provide the proper kinds of drill and practice. In this period being able to read meant being able to pronounce the words on the page accurately, fluently, and, for older students, eloquently.[5] The prevailing view of reading as a cognitive process was what we have come to call the simple view of reading. In the simple view, reading comprehension is thought of as the product of decoding and listening comprehension (RC = Dec * LC), and the major task of instruction is to ensure that students master the code so that comprehension can proceed more or less by "listening to what you read."[6]

Developments in the First Third of the Century

From 1900 to 1935 many new ideas emerged in the psychology and pedagogy of reading. These ideas had important and long-lasting consequences for reading instruction; many, in fact, are still with us on the cusp of a new century. I review several of these ideas in some detail because they provide a useful framework for understanding the reforms of later periods.

Early Reading Reforms

Words to letters. Several types of reform emerged (re-emerged may be a more accurate term for there are earlier iterations of each in the historical literature) to counter the evils of what most educators regarded as the mindless drill and practice of the alphabetic approach to beginning reading instruction. Despite the flurry of reform attempts, only two gathered enough momentum to survive. The first, dubbed the words-to-letters approach by Mitford Mathews,[7] introduced words in the very earliest stages and, for each word introduced, immediately asked children to decompose it into component letters.[8] Words-to-letters is the obverse of the alphabetic, or letters-to-words, approach. However, with the alphabetic approach, it shares the goal of ensuring that children learn the sound correspondences for each letter and the same set of underlying assumptions about the nature of teaching, learning, and reading. Today we would call it analytic (whole to part) phonics.

Words to reading. The second reform, which Mathews dubbed words-to-reading, later came to be known as the look-say or whole word method of teaching reading. Here, no attempt was made to analyze words into letter-sounds *until* a sizeable corpus of words were learned as sight words. Contrary to popular opinion, which would have us believe that phonics was never taught in the look-say approach,[9] some form of analytic phonics (a modified version of words-to-letters) usually kicked in after a corpus of a hundred or so sight words had been learned. It was different from a strict word-to-letters approach, though, because the strict requirement for decomposing each word into its component letters was dropped in favor of what might be called focused analysis. For example a teacher might group several words that start with the letter f (e.g., *farm, fun, family, fine*, and *first*) and ask students to note the similarity between the initial sounds and letters in each word. As it turned out, this approach (a combination of look-say with analytic phonics) persevered to become the "conventional wisdom" from 1930–1970.

A potpourri. Beyond these, there were a host of specialized programs described by various scholars at the turn of the century.[10] For example, no less than six specialized alphabets appeared in this period, each designed to make the task of learning to read easier by employing a temporary alphabet that created a one-to-one letter-sound match for young readers. George Farnham designed what may have been the first truly meaning-based approach to beginning reading; it was a whole sentence approach in which a series of single pictures were matched directly to a sentence describing its content (e.g., There are three eggs on the table). Finally, numerous examples of the use of group-composed language experience stories as young readers' first texts appeared, though this approach did not gather much momentum until after World War II.[11]

Other Influential Developments

Testing and the scientific movement. Reading was influenced by a host of developments during this period. For example, reading performance, like most other educational phenomena, became the object of scientific examination and systematic testing relatively early in the twentieth century.[12] Starting with the work of Edward L. Thorndike and William S. Gray, the period from roughly the first to the second World War witnessed the development of numerous reading assessments.[13] The first published reading assessment, circa 1914, was an oral reading assessment created by Gray (who eventually became a pre-eminent scholar in the reading field and the senior author of the country's most widely used reading series). However, most reading assessments developed in the first third of this century focused on the relatively new construct of silent reading. Unlike oral reading, which had to be tested individually and required that teachers judge the quality of responses, silent reading comprehension and rate could be tested in group settings and scored without recourse to professional judgment, (only stop watches and multiple choice questions were needed). Thus it fit the demands for efficiency and scientific objectivity, themes that were part of the emerging scientism of the period. Significant developments in reading comprehension would occur in the second third of the century, but assessment would remain a psychometric rather than a cognitive construct until the cognitive revolution of the early 1970s. When comprehension was implemented in school curricula, the same infrastructure of tasks used to create test items was used to create instructional and practice materials—finding main ideas, noting important details, determining sequence of events, cause-effect relations, comparing and contrasting, and drawing conclusions.[14]

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Text difficulty and readability. Text difficulty, codified as readability, emerged as an important research area and curricular concept in the first half of this century. Unlike the developments in testing, readability was grounded in child-centered views of pedagogy dating back to theorists such as Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Herbart and championed by the developmental psychology emerging in the 1920s and 30s.[15] The motive in developing readability formulas was to present children with texts that matched their interests and developmental capacities rather than to baffle them with abridged versions of adult texts. The first readability formula, created to gauge the grade placement of texts, appeared in 1923, and it was followed by some 80 additional formulas over the next forty years until the enterprise drew to a close in the late 1960s.[16] Irrespective of particular twists in individual formulas, each more or less boiled down to a sentence difficulty factor, typically instantiated as average sentence length, and a word factor, typically codified as word frequency. These formulas were critical in the production of commercial reading materials from the 1920s through the 1980s. For reasons that will become apparent later in this chapter, readability formulas did not survive the cognitive revolution in reading instruction in the 1970s and 1980s, although there are signs of their recovery in the 1990s.

Readiness. The third important curricular construct to emerge in the first third of the century was readiness. Like readability, it was grounded in developmental psychology rather than the scientific movement in education.[17] In research, the readiness movement was a search for the behavioral precursors to beginning reading acquisition: What skills or capacities must be in place before reading instruction can begin in earnest? What skills predict early reading success? The typical candidates for readiness skills were alphabet knowledge, auditory discrimination, visual discrimination, color and shape discrimination, following directions, language development, and, from time to time, kinesthetic and motor activities.[18] Despite the inclusion of a wide array of cognitive, perceptual, and linguistic variables in elaborate predictive studies, time and again knowledge of the names of the letters of the alphabet emerged as the best predictor of later reading achievement.[19] Scholars conducted studies with titles like "When Should Children Begin to Read?" and "The Necessary Mental Age for Beginning Reading."[20] Even though there was considerable controversy between those who wanted to delay formal instruction until maturation had a chance to do its work and those wanted to nudge it along with specific and explicit skills instruction, both sides shared the assumption that a formal stage of readiness preceded the acquisition of reading.

Reading skills. A fourth key curricular construct was the "reading skill"—that discrete unit of the curriculum which ought to be learned by students and taught by teachers. An important related construct was the notion of a scope and sequence of skills, a linear outline of skills that if taught properly ought to lead to skilled reading. While skills have always been a part of reading instruction (witness all the bits and pieces of letter sounds and syllables in the alphabetic approach), the skill as a fundamental unit of curriculum and the scope and sequence chart as a way of organizing skills that extend across the elementary grades are twentieth century phenomena, nurtured, I would add, by the rapid expansion of commercial basal reading programs and standardized reading tests.[21]

The basal experience with skills led quite directly to two additional curriculum mainstays—the teachers manual and the workbook. Throughout the nineteenth century and at least up through the first three decades of the twentieth century, basal programs consisted almost entirely of a set

of student books. Teachers relied on experience, or perhaps normal school education, to supply the pedagogy used to teach lessons with the materials. Occasionally, for students who had progressed beyond the primer to one of the more advanced readers, questions were provided to test understanding of the stories in the readers. In the early 1900s, publishers of basals began to include supplementary teaching suggestions, typically a separate section at the front or back of each book with a page or two of suggestions to accompany each selection. In one common practice of the period, publishers provided a model lesson plan for two or three stories; for later stories, they referred the teacher back to one of the models with the suggestion that they adapt it for the new story. By the 1930s, the teachers' manuals had expanded to several pages per selection.[22] The other significant development in the 1930s was the workbook, often marketed with titles like *My Think and Do Book* or *Work Play Books*.[23]

Both of these developments were symptomatic of the expansion of scope and sequence efforts: the more skills included, the more complicated the instructional routines and the greater the need for explicit directives to teachers and opportunities for students to practice the skills. From the 1930s until at least the 1980s, this approach to skills development has increased in intensity and scope. It was gradually extended beyond phonics to include comprehension, vocabulary, and study skills.[24] As I indicated earlier, the comprehension skills that made their way into basal workbooks and scope and sequence charts were virtually identical to those used to create comprehension tests. Each expansion resulted in heftier and more complex teachers' manuals and workbooks, another trend that has continued virtually unchecked since it began in the 1930s.

Remediation. Strictly speaking, remediation is a medical or psychological construct rather than a curricular construct. I have elevated it to the status of a curricular construct in this essay for the simple reason that it has exerted such a powerful influence on reading pedagogy over the past century. Beginning in the waning days of the nineteenth century and reaching its peak in the 1960s, the medical model has been a dominant force in our quest to meet the needs of those who struggle to learn to read. The hope is, and always was, that if we could just find the peaks and valleys in each child's profile of reading skills, we could offer focused instruction that would remedy the weaknesses and bring him or her (mostly *hims*, as our actuarial data suggest)[25] into a kind of skill equilibrium that would enable normal reading. It was, until recently, our sole approach to meeting individual needs.

Even in the classroom, the medical model, with its emphasis on diagnosis and prescription, has been the backbone of much of our instruction. After all, if filling in the valleys in children's instructional profiles works for those most in need, why wouldn't it work just as well for those less needy of instructional intervention? Don't all children deserve this sort of attention to individual needs? Note also that this diagnostic-prescriptive approach was a comfortable, maybe even a perfect, fit with the increasing emphasis on skills and scope and sequence charts in each succeeding edition of basals of this period; it is, after all, in the various skills that the performance peaks and valleys show up.

Professional Consensus

That Colonel Parker and Horace Mann felt the need to rationalize their child-centered approaches with rhetoric detailing the evils of the dreaded alphabetic approach suggests that debate was alive and well at the beginning of the century. My account of developments in the

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first third of the century implies a level of consensus that is not justified. Even though most scholars accepted the new emphasis on silent reading and comprehension without much debate, they found less agreement on matters of early reading. The ubiquity of the words-to-reading approach notwithstanding, a vocal phonics lobby, complete with their own published materials, remained active throughout this period. And the concept of readiness was hotly debated, with maturationists and interventionists lining up on opposite sides.[26] That said, it must be acknowledged that the rhetoric of this period was no match for what was to come later on; the metaphor of a smoldering fire seems an apt description of the recurring curricular debate during this period.

Developments at Mid-Century

The Scene in the 1960s

The period that spans roughly 1935 to 1965 is best viewed as a time in which we engaged in fine-tuning and elaboration of instructional models that were born in the first third of the century. Most important, the words-to-reading approach that had started its ascendancy at the turn of the century gained increasing momentum throughout the century until, as has been documented in survey research conducted in the 1960s, over 90 percent of the students in the country were taught to read using one commercial variation of this approach or another.[27] So common was this approach that Jeanne Chall, in her classic 1967 book, *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*, felt comfortable describing the then prevailing approach as a set of principles, which can be roughly paraphrased as follows:[28]

- The goals of reading, from the start in grade one, should include comprehension, interpretation, and application as well as word recognition.
- Instruction should begin with meaningful silent reading of stories that are grounded in children's experiences and interests.
- After a corpus of sight words is learned (somewhere between 50 and 100), analytic phonics instruction should begin. Phonics should be regarded as one of many cueing systems, including context and picture cues, available to children to unlock new words.
- Phonics instruction should be spread out over several years rather than concentrated in the early grades.
- Phonics instruction should be contextualized rather than isolated from real words and texts.
- The words in the early texts (grades 1–3) should be carefully controlled for frequency of use and repeated often to ensure mastery.
- Children should get off to a slow and easy start, probably through a readiness program; those not judged to be ready for formal reading instruction should experience an even longer readiness period.
- Children should be instructed in small groups.

While a few elements in her list are new, such as the early emphasis on comprehension and interpretation and the contextualization of phonics instruction, virtually all of the elements introduced in the early part of the century were included in her description of the conventional wisdom of the 1960s. A few things are missing when one compares Chall's list of principles underlying the conventional wisdom with our earlier account of the key developments through 1935. One is the role of skills in commercial reading programs. While skills did not make it onto her list of principles, it is clear from several chapters (specifically, chapters 7 and 8) in her 1967 book that she was mindful of their importance and curricular ubiquity. By the 1960s, skills lessons in the teachers' manual, accompanied by workbooks allowing students to practice the skills, were much more elaborate than in the 30s, 40s, or 50s. The other missing piece is the elaborate development of the teachers' manual. Earlier, I implied that they got bigger with each succeeding edition of the series. By the middle 1960s, that small teachers' guide section in the back of the children's book we found in the 20s and 30s had expanded to the point where the number of pages devoted to the teachers' guide equaled the number of student text pages in the upper grades and exceeded it in the primary grades.[29]

Taking Stock: 2

The materials of the 1960s were not fundamentally different from the materials available in the early part of the century. Students read stories and practiced skills. Text difficulty was carefully controlled in the basal reading materials published between the 1930s and the 1960s. In the earliest readers (pre-primer through first reader at least), vocabulary was sequenced in order of decreasing frequency of word usage in everyday written and oral language. Since many of the most frequent words are not regularly spelled (*the, of, what, where*, etc.), this frequency principle provided a good fit with the whole-word or look-say emphasis characteristic of the words-to-reading approach so dominant during this period.

Students were still the recipients, and teachers still the mediators, of the received curriculum. Meaning and silent reading were more important in the 1960s version of reading curriculum than in 1900 or 1935, as evidenced by a steady increase in the amount of time and teachers' manual space devoted to comprehension activities, but it was still not at the core of the look-say approach. When all is said and done, the underlying model of reading in the 1960s was still a pretty straightforward perceptual process; the simple view—that comprehension is the product of decoding and listening comprehension(RC = LC * Dec)—still prevailed. Readers still accomplished the reading task by translating graphic symbols (letters) on a printed page into an oral code (sounds corresponding to those letters) which was then treated by the brain as oral language. In both the look-say approach to learning sight vocabulary and its analytic approach to phonics, whether the unit of focus is a word or a letter, the basic task for the student is to translate from the written to the oral code. This view of reading was quite consistent with the prevailing instructional emphasis on skills. If sight words and phonics knowledge was what children needed to learn in order to perform the translation process, then decomposing phonics into separable bits of knowledge (letter-to-sound, or in the case of spelling, sound-to-letter, correspondences), each of which could be presented, practiced, and tested independently, was the route to helping them acquire that knowledge.

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The Legacy of the Scholarship of the 1960s

In beginning reading, the decade of the 1960s was a period of fervent activity. In the early 1960s, in an effort to settle the debate about the best way to teach beginning reading once and for all (this time with the tools of empirical scholarship rather than rhetoric), the Cooperative Research Branch of the United States Office of Education funded an elaborate collection of "First Grade Studies," loosely coupled forays into the highly charged arena of preferred approaches to beginning reading instruction.[30] While each of the studies differed from one another in the particular emphasis, most of them involved a comparison of different methods of teaching beginning reading. They were published in a brand new journal, *Reading Research Quarterly*, in 1966. Jeanne Chall completed her magnum opus, *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*, in 1967. It too had been funded in order to put the debate behind us, but Chall would use different scholarly tools to accomplish her goals. She would employ critical review procedures to examine our empirical research base, the content of our basal readers, and exemplary classroom practices. In 1965, Lyndon Johnson's Elementary and Secondary Education Act, one key plank in his Great Society platform, brought new resources for compensatory education to schools through a program dubbed Title I. And Commissioner of Education James Allen would, at decade's end, establish the national Right to Read program as a way of guaranteeing that right to each child in America. The country was clearly focused on early reading, and many were optimistic that we would find answers to the questions about teaching reading that had vexed us for decades, even centuries.

Chall's book and the First Grade Studies had an enormous impact on beginning reading instruction and indirectly on reading pedagogy more generally. One message of the First Grade Studies was that just about any alternative, when compared to the business-as-usual basals (which served as a common control in each of 20+ separate quasi-experimental studies), elicited equal or greater performance on the part of first graders (and, as it turned out, second graders).[31] It did not seem to matter much what the alternative was— language experience, a highly synthetic phonics approach, a linguistic approach (control the text so that young readers are exposed early on only to easily decodable words grouped together in word families, such as the *–an* family, the *–at* family, the *–ig* family, etc.), a special alphabet (i.e., the Initial Teaching Alphabet), or a even basals infused with a heavier-than-usual dose of phonics right up front—they were all the equal or the better of the ubiquitous basal. A second message, one that was both sent and received, was that the racehorse mentality of studies that compare one method against another had probably run its course. By accepting this message, the reading research community was free to turn its efforts to other, allegedly more fruitful, issues and questions—the importance of the teacher quite irrespective of method, the significance of site, and the press of other aspects of the curriculum such as comprehension and writing.[32] With the notable exception of the Follow-Through Studies in the 1970s, which are only marginally related to reading, it would take another twenty-five years for large-scale experiments to return to center stage in reading.[33]

In spite of a host of other important recommendations, most of which had some short term effect, the ultimate legacy of Chall's book reduces to just one—that early attention to the code in some way, shape, or form must be reinfused into early reading instruction. For the record, Chall recommended five broad changes: (a) make a necessary change in method (to an early emphasis on phonics of some sort), (b) re-examine current ideas about content (focus on the enduring

themes in folk tales), (c) re-evaluate grade levels (increase the challenge at every grade level), (d) develop new tests (both single component tests and absolute measures with scores that are independent of the population taking the test), and (e) improve reading research (including its accessibility). Each of these recommendations will be discussed later.

The look-say basals that had experienced virtually uninterrupted progress from 1930 to 1965 never quite recovered from the one-two punch delivered by Chall's book and the First Grade Studies in 1967. Given the critical sacking they took from Chall and the empirical thrashing they took from the First Grade Studies, one might have expected one of the pretenders to the early reading throne, documented so carefully in the First Grade Studies, to assume the mantle of the new conventional wisdom in the years that followed. Ironically, it was the basals themselves, albeit in a radically altered form, that captured the marketplace of the 1970s and 1980s. They accomplished this feat by overhauling themselves to adapt to a changing market shaped by these two important scholarly efforts. Basal programs that debuted in the five years after Chall's book appeared were radically different from their predecessors. Most notably, *phonics* that had been relegated to a skill to be taught contextually after a hefty bank of sight words had been committed to memory, was back—from day one of grade one—in the series that hit the market in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Surprisingly, it was not the highly synthetic alphabetic approach of the previous century or the remedial clinics of the 1930s (which one might have expected from a reading of Chall's book). It is better described as an intensification and repositioning (to grade one) of the analytic phonics that had been taught in the latter part of grade 1 and in grades 2 to 4 in the look-say basals of the 1960s.[34] Equally significant, there was a change in *content*, at least in grade one. Dick and Jane and all their assorted pairs of competing cousins—Tom and Susan, Alice and Jerry, Jack and Janet—were retired from the first grade curriculum and replaced by a wider array of stories and characters; by the early 1970s, more of the selections were adaptations of children's literature rather than stories written to conform to a vocabulary restriction or a readability formula..

It is hard to determine how seriously educators and publishers took Chall's other three recommendations. For example, in the basals that came out after Chall, the grade 1 books (the preprimers, primers, and readers) were considerably more *challenging* than their immediate predecessors, mainly by virtue of a much more challenging grade 1 vocabulary—more words introduced much earlier in the grade 1 program.[35] One series even divided its new vocabulary words into words that ought to be explicitly introduced as sight words and those words, which they dubbed *decodable*, that should be recognized by the students by applying the phonics skills they had been taught up to that point in the program.[36] Beyond grade 1, however, changes in difficulty were much less visible, and no appreciable increase in the readability scores of these later levels occurred.

In testing, a major change toward single component tests did occur, although it is difficult to attribute this change solely to Chall's recommendation. Beginning in the early 70s and running through at least the late 80s, each successive edition of basal programs brought an increase in the number of single component tests—tests for each phonics skill (all the beginning, middle and final consonant sounds, vowel patterns, and syllabication), tests for each comprehension skill (main idea, finding details, drawing conclusions, and determining cause-effect relations) at every grade level, tests for alphabetical order and using the encyclopedia, and just about any other skill one might think of.

But other events and movements of the period also pointed toward single component tests. For one, owing to the intellectual contributions of Benjamin Bloom and John Carroll, the mastery learning movement[37] was gathering its own momentum during the late 1960s. According to proponents of mastery learning, if a complex domain could be decomposed into manageable subcomponents, each of which could be taught and learned to some predetermined level of mastery, then most, if not all, students should be able to master the knowledge and skills in the domain. Second, criterion-referenced tests were spawned during this same period.[38] The logic of criterion-referenced assessment was that some predetermined level of mastery (say 80% correct), not the average for a group of students in a given grade level, ought to be the reference point for determining how well a student was doing on a test. A third construct from this period, curriculum-embedded assessment,[39] held that students should be held to account for precisely what was needed to march successfully through a particular curriculum—no less, no more. If one could specify the scope and sequence of knowledge and skills in the curriculum and develop assessments for each, then it should be possible to guide all students through the curriculum, even if some needed more practice and support than others. One can imagine a high degree of compatibility among all three of these powerful constructs—mastery learning, criterion-referenced assessment, and curriculum-embedded assessment. All three provide comfortable homes for single component assessments of the sort Chall was advocating.

With powerful evidence from mastery learning's application to college students,[40] publishers of basal programs and some niche publishers began to create and implement what came to be called skills management systems.[41] In their most meticulous application, these systems *became* the reading program. Students took a battery of mastery tests, practiced those skills they had not mastered (usually by completing worksheets that looked remarkably like the tests), took tests again, and continued through this cycle until they had mastered all the skills assigned to the grade level (or until the year ended). Unsurprisingly, the inclusion of these highly specific skill tests had the effect of increasing the salience of workbooks, worksheets, and other skill materials that students could practice on in anticipation of (and as a consequence of) mastery tests. Thus the basals of this period were comprised of two parallel systems: (1) the graded series of anthologies filled with stories and short non-fiction pieces for oral and silent reading and discussion, and (2) an embedded skills management system to guide the development of phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, and study skills.

Chall's last recommendation was to improve reading research. Research had been too inaccessible (to the very audience of practitioners who most needed it), too narrow in scope, and too dismissive of its past. All that needed to change, she argued. As I will detail in the next section, reading research changed dramatically, but not necessarily in a direction Chall envisioned.

One other change in basal reading programs in this period worth noting was the technology to place reduced facsimiles of student text pages onto a page where it could be surrounded by teaching suggestions and questions for guided reading. This was hailed as a major advance in the utility of manuals because teachers did not have to turn back and forth from student text to the teacher's section in order to guide the reading of a story.

This was the scene, then, in the early 1970s, just as the reading field was about to embark on a new curricular trek that continues even today. If the middle third of the century was

characterized by a steady, unwavering march toward the ever-increasing prominence of a particular philosophy and set of curricular practices encapsulated in ubiquitous basals that championed a look-say approach,[42] the early 1970s brought major challenges in philosophy and pedagogy—harder texts, more phonics, and a skill development program unlike anything seen before.[43]

Taking Stock: 3

But even with some alterations in the materials available and some new pedagogical twists, the pedagogy of the early 1970s revealed little fundamental change in the underlying assumptions about the role of the teacher and learner or the nature of reading and writing. Teachers, armed with their basal manuals, controlled the learning situation as never before, and students continued to play the role of passive recipient of the knowledge and skills mediated by the teacher. Most important, reading was still a fundamentally perceptual process of translating letters into sounds. If anything, the perceptual nature of reading was made more salient than in the 1950s and 1960s by the return of phonics to center stage.

Developments in the Last Third of the Century

Reading as the Province of Other Scholarly Traditions[44]

Somewhere during this period—the exact point of departure is hard to fix—we began a journey that would take us through many new twists and turns on the way to different landscapes than we had visited before. Along the way we confronted fundamental shifts in our views of reading and writing and started to create a variety of serious curricular alternatives to the conventional wisdom of the 1970s. Just beyond the horizon lay even more unfamiliar and rockier territory--the conceptual revolutions in cognition, sociolinguistics, and philosophy that would have such far-reaching consequences for reading curriculum and pedagogy of the 1980s and 1990s.

Reading became an ecumenical scholarly commodity; it was embraced by scholars from many different fields of inquiry. The first to take reading under their wing were the linguists, who wanted to convince us that reading was a language process closely allied to its sibling language processes of writing, speaking, and listening. Then came the psycholinguists and the cognitive psychologists, followed soon by the sociolinguists, the philosophers, the literary critics, and the critical theorists. It is not altogether clear why reading has attracted such interest from scholars in so many other fields. One explanation is that reading is considered by so many to be a key to success in other endeavors in and out of school; this is often revealed in comments like, "Well if you don't learn to read, you can't learn other things for yourself." Another is that scholars in these other disciplines thought that the educationists had got it all wrong, and it was time for another group to have their say. Whatever the reasons, the influence of these other scholarly traditions on reading pedagogy is significant; in fact, the pedagogy of the 1980s and 1990s cannot be understood without a firm grounding in the changes in world view that these perspectives spawned.

Linguistics. In 1962, Charles Fries published a book entitled *Linguistics and Reading*. In it, he outlined what he thought the teaching of reading would look like if it were viewed from the perspective of linguistics. In the same decade, several other important books and articles appeared, each carrying essentially the same message: The perspective of the modern science of linguistics, we were told, would privilege different models and methods of teaching reading. It would tell us, for example, that some things do not need to be taught explicitly because the oral language takes care of them more or less automatically. For example, the three different pronunciations of –ed, (as in *nabbed*, *capped*, and *jaded*), need not be taught as a reading skill because our oral language conventions determine the pronunciation almost perfectly. English in its oral form demands the voiced alternative /d/ after a voiced consonant such as /b/. It demands the unvoiced alternative /t/ after an unvoiced consonant, such as /p/, and it requires the syllabic version /ɔd/ after either /d/ or /t/. To teach these rules, which are very complex, would likely make things more confusing than simply allowing the oral language to do its work without fanfare.

Another linguistic insight came to us from the transformational generative grammars that replaced conventional structural linguistics as the dominant paradigm within the field during the 60s and 70s. Noam Chomsky published two revolutionary treatises during this period—*Syntactic Structures* in 1957 and *Aspects of a Theory of Syntax* in 1965. With these books Chomsky revolutionized the field of linguistics and paved the way, theoretically, for equally dramatic changes in the way that psychologists thought about and studied the processes of language comprehension and language acquisition.

Chomsky also provided the basis for a nativist view about language acquisition—a view that holds that humans come to the world "wired" to acquire the language of the community into which they are born. He and others drew this inference from two basic and contrasting facts about language: (a) language is incredibly complex and (b) language is acquired quite easily and naturally by children living in an environment in which they are simply exposed to (rather than taught!) the language of their community well before they experience school. Only a view that children are equipped with some special cognitive apparatus for inferring complex rules could explain this remarkable feat.

Because our prevailing views of both reading comprehension and reading acquisition were derived from the same behavioristic assumptions that Chomsky and his peers had attacked, reading scholars began to wonder whether those assumptions would hold up when we applied similar perspectives and criticisms to analyses of written language comprehension and acquisition.[45]

Psycholinguistics. During the decade after the publication of *Syntactic Structures*, a new field of inquiry, psycholinguistics, evolved. In its first several years of existence, the field devoted itself to determining whether the views of linguistic competence and language acquisition that had been set forth by Chomsky and his colleagues could serve as psychological models of language performance. While the effort to develop a simple mapping from Chomsky to models of language performance waned after a few unsatisfactory attempts, the field of psycholinguistics and the disposition of psychologists to study language with complex theoretical tools had been firmly established.

Particularly influential on our thinking about reading were scholars of language acquisition[46] who established the rule-governed basis of language learning. In contrast to earlier views, these psycholinguists found that children did not imitate written language; rather, as members of a language community, they were participants in language and invented for themselves rules about how oral language worked. This insight allowed researchers to explain such constructions as "I eated my dinner" and "I gots two foots." Roger Brown and his colleagues showed conclusively that children were active learners who inferred rules and tested them out. Much as Kenneth Goodman would later show with written language, "mistakes," especially overgeneralizations, in oral language could be used to understand the rule systems that children were inventing for themselves.

The analogy with oral language development was too tempting for reading educators to resist. Several adopted something like a nativist framework in studying the acquisition of reading, asking what the teaching of reading and writing would look like if we assumed that children can learn to read and write in much the same way as they learn to talk—that is, naturally. What would happen if we assumed that children were members of a community in which reading and writing are valued activities that serve important communication functions? What if we assumed that the most important factors in learning to read and write were having genuine reasons for communicating in these media and having access to a data base in which there was so much print and talk about print that students could discover the patterns and regularities on their own, much as they do when they discover the patterns and regularities of oral language? While the seminal work involved in putting these assumptions to empirical tests would wait for a couple of decades, the seeds of doubt about our perceptually based views of reading acquisition were firmly planted by the middle 1960s.

Two influential individuals, Kenneth Goodman and Frank Smith, led the reading field in addressing these kinds of questions. In 1965, Goodman demonstrated that the errors children made while reading orally were better viewed as windows into the inner workings of their comprehension processes than as mistakes to be eradicated. He found that the mistakes that children made while reading in context revealed that they were trying to make sense of what they read. In another seminal 1967 piece, *Reading: A Psycholinguistic Guessing Game*, Goodman laid out the elements of language that he thought that readers employed as they constructed meaning for the texts they encountered. In reading, he conjectured, readers use three cue systems to make sense of text: syntactic cues, semantic cues, and grapho-phonemic cues. By attending to all of these cue sources, Goodman contended, readers could reduce their uncertainty about unknown words or meanings, thus rendering both the word identification and comprehension processes more manageable.[47]

Smith's revolutionary ideas were first presented in 1971 in a book entitled, *Understanding Reading*.[48] In this seminal text, Smith argued that reading was not something one was *taught*, but rather was something one *learned* to do. Smith believed that there were no special prerequisites to learning to read, indeed, that reading was simply making sense of one particular type of information in our environment. As such, reading was what one learned to do as a consequence of belonging to a literate society. One learned to read from reading. The implication, which Smith made explicit, was that the "function of teachers is not so much to *teach* reading as to help children read" (pg. 3). This certainly challenged the notion of the teacher as the individual who meted out knowledge and skills to passively waiting students. For Smith, all knowing and all

learning were constructive processes; individuals made sense of what they encountered based on what they already knew.[49] Even perception, he contended, was a decision-making, predictive process based on prior knowledge.

Smith also argued that reading was only incidentally visual. By that, Smith meant that being able to see was necessary but not sufficient to achieve understanding. He identified four sources of information: orthographic, syntactic, semantic, and visual, all of which he claimed were somewhat redundant, and argued that skilled readers made use of the three sources that were a part of their prior knowledge (the orthographic, syntactic, and semantic) in order to minimize their reliance on visual information. In fact, the danger in relying too heavily on visual information is that readers might lose sight of meaning.

The psycholinguistic perspective had a number of influences on reading pedagogy. First, it valued literacy experiences that focused on making meaning. This meant that many classroom activities, particularly worksheets and games, which focused on enabling skills such as specific letter-sound correspondences, syllabication activities, structural analysis skills, specific comprehension activities, or study skills were devalued. Second, it helped us to value texts for beginning readers, such as example 1 (see Table 1), in which authors relied on natural language patterns, thus making it possible for emerging readers to use their knowledge of language to predict words and meanings. This meant that texts that relied on high-frequency words in short, choppy sentences (what we have come to call basalese), as in example 2, or those based upon the systematic application of some phonics element (i.e., a decodable text), as in example 3, were correspondingly devalued.

Table 1. Sample Texts for Beginning Reading

1. Red Fox, Red Fox, what do you see?
   I see a blue bird looking at me.
   Blue Bird, Blue Bird, what do you see?
   I see a green frog looking at me.
   Anon, anon.

2. Run, John, run.
   Run to Dad.
   Dad will run.
   Run, Dad.
   Run, Jean.
   See them run.

3. Nat can bat.
   Nat can bat with the fat bat.
   The cat has the fat bat.
   The rat has the fat bat.
   Nat has the fat bat.
   Bat the bat, Nat.

Third, the psycholinguistic perspective helped us understand the reading process and appreciate children's efforts as readers. Errors were no longer things to be corrected; instead they were

windows into the workings of the child's mind, allowing both the teacher and the child to understand more about the reading process and reading strategies. Understanding miscues also helped educators focus on comprehension and appreciate risk-taking.

Fourth, psycholinguists gave us a means (miscue analysis) and a theory (reading as a constructive process) that was remarkably distinct from previous ideas about reading. The perspective made explicit links between oral and written language acquisition and helped us view reading as language rather than simply perception or behavior. In a sense, psycholinguistics continued the changes and traditions begun by the linguistic perspective; however, within the reading field, its influence was deeper and broader than its academic predecessor.

Most important, psycholinguistics affected our views of teaching and learning in a fundamental way. Reading scholars began to rethink ideas about what needed to be taught, as well as the relation between teaching and learning. So, instead of asking, "What can I teach this child so that she *will eventually become* a reader?", we began to ask, "What can I do to help this child *as* a reader?" Some teachers began to welcome all children into what Smith referred to as "The Literacy Club" as an alternative to teaching children so-called prerequisite skills.[50]

Cognitive psychology. If psycholinguistics enabled psychologists to reexamine their assumptions about language learning and understanding by placing greater emphasis on the active, intentional role of language users, cognitive psychology allowed psychologists to extend constructs such as human purpose, intention, and motivation to a greater range of psychological phenomena, including perception, attention, comprehension, learning, memory, and executive control of all cognitive process. All of these would have important consequences in reading pedagogy.

I cannot emphasize too strongly the dramatic nature of the paradigm shift that occurred within those branches of psychology concerned with human intellectual processes. The previous half-century, from roughly the teens through the fifties, had been dominated by a behaviorist perspective in psychology that shunned speculation about the inner workings of the mind. Just show us the surface-level outcomes of the processes, as indexed by overt, observable behaviors. Leave the speculation to the philosophers. That was the contextual background against which both psycholinguistics and cognitive psychology served as dialectical antagonists when they appeared on the scene in the late 60s and early 70s.

The most notable change within psychology was that it became fashionable for psychologists, perhaps for the first time since the early part of the century, to study reading.[51] And in the decade of the 1970s works by psychologists flooded the literature on basic processes in reading. One group focused on text comprehension by trying to ferret out how it is that readers come to understand the underlying structure of texts. We were offered story grammars—structural accounts of the nature of narratives, complete with predictions about how those structures impede and enhance human story comprehension. Others chose to focus on the expository tradition in text.[52] Like their colleagues interested in story comprehension, they believed that structural accounts of the nature of expository (informational) texts would provide valid and useful models for human text comprehension. And in a sense, both of these efforts worked. Story grammars did account for story comprehension. Analyses of the structural relations among ideas in an informational piece did account for text comprehension. But what neither text-analysis tradition really tackled was the relationship between the knowledge of the world that readers bring to text and comprehension of those texts. In other words, by focusing on structural rather

than the ideational, or content, characteristics of texts, they failed to get to the heart of comprehension. That task, as it turned out, fell to one of the most popular and influential movements of the 70s, schema theory.

Schema theory[53] is a theory about the structure of human knowledge as it is represented in memory. In our memory, schemata are like little containers into which we deposit particular experiences that we have. So, if we see a chair, we store that visual experience in our chair schema. If we go to a restaurant, we store that experience in our restaurant schema, if we attend a party, our party schema, and so on. Clearly schema theory is linked to Piaget's theories of development and his two types of learning, assimilation and accommodation. When we assimilate new information, we store it in an existing schema; when we accommodate new information, we modify the structure of our schemata to fit the new data. The modern iteration of schema theory also owes a debt to Frederic Bartlett, who, writing in the 1930s, used the construct of schema to explain culturally driven interpretations of stories. For Bartlett, cultural schemata for stories were so strong that they prevented listeners, whether European or native Alaskan in background, from adopting the story schema of the other culture to understand its stories. Bartlett's account predates the current "constructivist models of cognition and learning by sixty years; and his view is as inherently constructive as those who have succeeded him. In essence, Bartlett was saying exactly what modern constructivists say—that readers and listeners actively construct meanings for texts they encounter rather than simple "receiving" meaning from the texts.[54]

Schema theory also provides a credible account of reading comprehension, which probably, more than any of its other features, accounted for its popularity within the reading field in the 1970s and 80s.[55] It is not hard to see why schema theory was so appealing to theoreticians, researchers, and practitioners when it arrived on the scene in the 1970s. First, it provides a rich and detailed theoretical account of the everyday intuition that we understand and learn what is new in terms of what we already know. Second, it also accounts for another everyday intuition about why we, as humans, so often disagree about our interpretation of an event, a story, an article, a movie, or a TV show—we disagree with one another because we approach the phenomenon with very different background experiences and knowledge. Third, it accounts for a third everyday intuition that might be called an "it's-all-Greek-to-me" experience: Sometimes we just don't have enough background knowledge to understand a new experience or text.

While these insights may not sound earthshaking after the fact, for the field of reading, and for education more generally, they were daunting challenges to our conventional wisdom. Examined in light of existing practices in the 1970s, they continued the revolutionary spirit of the linguistic and psycholinguistic perspectives. Schema theory encouraged us to ask:

> What is it that my children already know? And how can I use that to help them deal with these new ideas that I would like them to know?

rather than,

> What is it that they do not know? And how can I get that into their heads?

More specifically, with respect to reading comprehension, schema theory encouraged us to examine texts from the perspective of the knowledge and cultural backgrounds of our students in order to evaluate the likely connections that they would be able to make between ideas that are in

the text and the schema that they would bring to the reading task. Schema theory, like the psycholinguistic perspective, also promoted a constructivist view of comprehension; all readers must, at every moment in the reading process, construct a coherent model of reading for the texts they read. The most important consequence of this constructivist perspective is that there is inherent ambiguity about where meaning resides. Does it reside in the text? In the author's mind as she set pen to paper? In the mind of each reader as she builds a model of meaning unique to her experience and reading? In the interaction between reader and text?

Sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics as a discipline developed in parallel with psycholinguistics. Beginning with the work of William Labov, and Joan Baratz and Roger Shuy, sociolinguists had important lessons for reading scholars.[56] Mainly these lessons focused on issues of dialect and reading. Sociolinguists were finding that dialects were not ill- or half-formed variations of standard English. Instead, each dialect constituted a well-developed linguistic system in its own right, complete with rules for variations from standard English and a path of language development for its speakers. Speakers of dialects expressed linguistic *differences* not linguistic *deficits*. The goal of schooling was not, and should not be, to eradicate the dialect in the process of making each individual a speaker of standard English. Instead, sociolinguists stressed the need to find ways to accommodate children's use of their dialect while they are learning to read and write. Several proposals for achieving this accommodation were tried and evaluated. The first was to write special readers for dialect speakers. In the early 1960s, several examples of Black dialect readers appeared and, almost as rapidly, disappeared from major urban districts. They failed primarily because African-American parents did not want their children learning with "special" materials; they wanted their children to be exposed to mainstream materials used by other children.[57] The second equally unsuccessful strategy was to delay instruction in reading and writing until the oral language became more standardized. Teachers who tried this technique soon found out just how resistant and persistent early language learning can be. The third, and most successful, approach to dialect accommodation involved nothing more than recognizing that a child who translates a standard English text into a dialect is performing a remarkable feat of translation rather than making reading errors. So, an African-American child who says /pos/ when he sees *post* is simply applying a rule of Black English which requires a consonant cluster in ending position to be reduced to the sound of the first consonant. Unfortunately for children who speak a dialect, we, as a field, did not take the early lessons of the sociolinguists to heart. We continue to find schools in which children are scolded for using the oral language that they have spent their whole lives learning. We also continue to find children whose dialect translations are treated as if they were oral reading errors.

Prior to the advent of the sociolinguistic perspective, when educators talked about "context" in reading, they typically meant the print that surrounded particular words on a page. In the 1980's, and primarily because of the work of sociolinguists, the meaning of the word context expanded to include not only what was on the page, but what Bloome and Green referred to as the instructional, non-instructional, and home and community contexts of literacy.[58] From a sociolinguistic perspective, reading always occurred in a context, a context that was shaped by the literacy event at the same time as it shaped the event. The sociolinguistic versions of knowledge and language as socially and culturally constructed processes moved the constructivist metaphor to another plane, incorporating not only readers' prior knowledge in the form of schemata, but also the meanings constructed by peers and by one's cultural ancestors.

The most significant legacy of the sociolinguistic perspective was our heightened consciousness about language as a social and therefore cultural construction. Suddenly, reading was a part of a bigger and more complex world. Sociolinguists examined the role of language in school settings. For example, they pointed out that often success in reading was not so much an indication of reading "ability" per se, but of the success the individual experienced in learning how to use language appropriately in educational settings. Thus success, according to a sociolinguistic analysis, was more an index of how well children learned to "do school" than how well they could read. They contrasted the functions that language serves in school with the functions it serves outside of school and helped us rethink the role of language within the classroom. By studying the community outside of school, sociolinguists made us conscious of social, political, and cultural differences; as a result, we began to rethink our judgments of language and behavior. We saw that any judgment call we made, rather than reflecting the "right" way, simply reflected "our" way—the way we as teachers thought and talked and behaved because of the cultural situation in which we lived outside as well as inside school. By focusing on the role of community in learning, they caused many educators to rethink the competitive atmosphere of classrooms and of school labels and recommended changes within schools so that children could learn from and with each other. With these contributions from sociolinguists, it was becoming more and more apparent that reading was not only not context-free but that it was embedded in multiple contexts.

Literary theory perspective. One cannot understand the pedagogical changes in practice that occurred in the elementary reading curriculum in the 1980s without understanding the impact of literary theory, particularly reader response theory. In our secondary schools, the various traditions of literary criticism have always had a voice in the curriculum, especially in guiding discussions of classic literary works. Until the middle 1980s, the "new criticism" that had emerged in the post World War II era had dominated for several decades, and it had sent teachers and students on a search for the one "true" meaning in each text they encountered. With the emergence (some would argue the re-emergence) of reader response theories, all of which gave as much, if not more, authority to the reader than to either the text or the author, the picture, along with our practices, changed dramatically. While there are many modern versions of reader response available, the work of Louise Rosenblatt has been most influential among elementary teachers and reading educators. In the 1980s, many educators re-read (or more likely read for the first time) Rosenblatt's 1976 edition of her 1938 text, *Literature as Exploration*, and *The Reader, the Text, The poem*, which appeared in 1978. Rosenblatt argues that meaning is something that resides neither in the head of the reader (as some had previously argued) nor on the printed page (as others had argued).[59] Instead, Rosenblatt contends, meaning is created in the transaction between reader and document. This meaning, which she refers to as the poem, resides above the reader-text interaction. Meaning is therefore neither subject nor object nor the interaction of the two. Instead it is transaction, something new and different from any of its inputs and influences.[60]

The Pedagogical Correlates of New Perspectives

While the post-Chall basal tradition continued well into the decade of the 1980s, new perspectives, and practices began to show up in classrooms, journal articles, and basal lessons in the early 1980s.

Comprehension on center stage. Comprehension, especially as a workbook activity and a follow-up to story reading, was not a stranger to the reading classrooms of the 30s through the 70s. As indicated earlier, it entered the curriculum as a story discussion tool and as a way of assessing reading competence in the first third of this century.[61] Developments during mid-century were highlighted in an earlier NSSE yearbook devoted to reading;[62] by mid-century, the infrastructure of comprehension had been elaborated extensively and infused into the guided reading and workbook task. It was a staple of basal programs when Chall conducted her famous study of early reading, and had she emphasized reading instruction in the intermediate grades rather than grade one, it would undoubtedly have been more prominent in her account.

During the late 1970s and through the decade of the 1980s comprehension found its way to center stage in reading pedagogy. Just as a nationally sponsored set of research activities (i.e., the First Grade Studies and Chall's book) focused energy on reforms in beginning reading in the late 1960s, it was the federally funded Center for the Study of Reading, initiated in 1976, that focused national attention on comprehension. Although the Center's legacy is undoubtedly bringing schema theory and the knowledge-comprehension relationship into our national conversation, it also supported much research on comprehension instruction,[63] including research that attempted to help students develop a repertoire of strategies for improving their comprehension.[64] This research was not limited to the Center; indeed many other scholars were equally involved in developing instructional strategies and routines during this period, including emphases on monitoring comprehension,[65] transactional strategies instruction,[66] KWL graphic organizers,[67] and, more recently, questioning the author.[68] Many of these new strategies found their way into the basals of the 1980s, which demonstrated substantially more emphasis on comprehension at all levels, including grade one.[69]

Literature-based reading. Even though selections from both classical and contemporary children's literature have always been a staple of basal selections dating back to the nineteenth century (especially after grade 2 when the need for strict vocabulary control diminished), literature virtually exploded into the curriculum in the late 1980s. A short burst in literary content occurred after Chall's critical account of the type of selections and the challenge of basal content; more excerpts from authentic literature appeared, even in the grade one readers. But these selections had two characteristics that had always offended those who champion the use of genuine literature—excerpting and adaptation. Rarely were whole books included; instead, whole chapters or important slices were excerpted for inclusion. And even when a whole chapter was included, it was usually adapted to (a) reduce vocabulary difficulty, (b) reduce the grammatical complexity of sentences, or (c) excise words (e.g., mild profanity) or themes that might offend important segments of the market.

Beyond basals, children's literature played an important supplementary role in the classrooms of teachers who believed that they must engage their students in a strong parallel independent reading program. Often this took the form of each child selecting books to be read individually and later discussed with the teacher in a weekly one-on-one conference. And even as far back as the 1960s, there were a few programs which turned this individualized reading component into the main reading program.[70]

But in the late 1980s, literature was dramatically repositioned. Several factors converged to pave the way for a groundswell in the role of literature in elementary reading. Surely the resurgence of

reader response theory as presented by Rosenblatt was important, as was the compatibility of the reader response theory and its emphasis on interpretation with the constructivism that characterized both cognitive and sociolinguistic perspectives. Research also played a role; in 1985, for example, in the watershed publication of the Center for the Study of Reading, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, Richard Anderson and his colleagues documented the importance of "just plain reading" as a critical component of any and all elementary reading programs.[71] This is also a period that witnessed an unprecedented expansion in the number of new children's books published annually. Finally, a few pieces of scholarship exerted enormous influence on teachers and teacher educators. Perhaps most influential was Nancie Atwell's, *In the Middle*. In her account she laid out her story, as a middle school teacher, of how she invited readers, some of whom were quite reluctant, into a world of books and reading. The credibility of her experience and the power of her prose were persuasive in convincing thousands of classroom teachers that they could use existing literature and "reading workshops" to accomplish anything that a basal program could accomplish in skill development while gaining remarkable advantages in students' literary experience.[72]

In terms of policy and curriculum, the most significant event in promoting literature-based reading was the 1988 California Reading Framework. The framework called for reading materials which contained much more challenging texts at all levels. More important, it mandated the use of genuine literature, not the dumbed-down adaptations and excerpts from children's literature that had been the staple of basal programs for decades. Publishers responded to the call of California's framework and produced a remarkably different product in the late 1980s and early 1990s than had ever appeared before on the basal market.[73] Gone were excerpts and adaptations, and with them almost any traces of vocabulary control. Skills that had been front and center in the basals of the 70s and 80s were relegated to appendix-like status. Comprehension questions were replaced by more interpretive, impressionistic response to literature activities. All this was done in the name of providing children with authentic literature and authentic activities to accompany it. The logic was that if we could provide students with real literature and real motivations for reading it, much of what is arduous about skill teaching and learning will take care of itself.

Book Clubs and literature circles are the most visible instantiations of the literature based reading movement.[74] The underlying logic of Book Clubs is the need to engage children in the reading of literature in the same way as adults engage one another in voluntary reading circles. Such voluntary structures are likely to elicit greater participation, motivation, appreciation, and understanding on the part of students. Teachers are encouraged to establish a set of "cultural practices" (ways of interacting and supporting one another) in their classrooms to support students as they make their way into the world of children's literature. These cultural practices offer students both the opportunity to engage in literature and the skills to ensure that they can negotiate and avail themselves of that opportunity.

Process writing. In the middle 1980s, writing achieved a stronghold in the elementary language arts curriculum that it had never before held. Exactly why and how it achieved that position of prominence is not altogether clear, but certain explanations are plausible. Key understandings from the scholarship of the 70s and 80s paved the way. Functionality associated with the sociolinguistic perspective, process writing approaches encouraged teachers to ask students to write for genuine audiences and purposes. The psycholinguistic notion of "error" as a window

into children's thinking allowed us to worry less about perfect spelling and grammar and more about the quality of the thinking and problem solving children were producing. The general acceptance of constructivist epistemologies disposed us to embrace writing as the most transparently constructive of all pedagogical activities. All of these constructs allowed us as a profession to take a different developmental view on writing, one consistent with the emergent literacy perspective that was gaining strength in early childhood literacy. We came to view all attempts to make sense by setting pen to paper, however deviant from adult models, as legitimate and revealing in their own right if examined through the eyes of the child writer. Led by Donald Graves and Lucy Calkins, we revolutionized our views of early writing development.[75] Finally, we began to see reading and writing as inherently intertwined, each supporting the other.

Integrated instruction. It is impossible to document the history of reading instruction in the twentieth century without mentioning the ways in which we have attempted to integrate reading with other curricular phenomena. Two stances have dominated our thinking about how to integrate reading into other curricula—integration of reading with the other language arts (writing, speaking, and listening) and integration across subject matter boundaries (with mathematics, science, social studies, art, and music). Like literature-based reading, both senses of integration have long been a part of the thinking about elementary reading curriculum.[76] In fact, a look back to the progressivism of Dewey and other scholars in the first part of this century reveals substantial rhetoric about teaching and learning across curricular boundaries.[77] From that early spurt of energy until the late 1980s, however, integrations assumed a minor role in American reading instruction. In basal manuals, for example, integration was portrayed almost as an afterthought until the late 1980s; it appeared in the part of the lesson that follows the guided reading and skills instruction sections, signaling that these are things that a teacher can get to "if time permits." Things changed in the late 1980s. For one, integrated curriculum fit the sociolinguistic emphasis on language in use—the idea that language, including reading, is best taught and learned when it is put to work in the service of other purposes, activities, and learning efforts. Similarly, with the increase in importance of writing, especially early writing of the sort discussed by Graves and his colleagues,[78] it was tempting to champion the idea of integrated language arts instruction. In fact, the constructivist metaphor is nowhere played out as vividly and transparently as in writing, leading many scholars to use writing as a model for the sort of constructive approach they wanted to promote in readers. The notion was that we needed to help students learn to "read like a writer."[79] Also influential in supporting the move toward integrated instruction was the work of Donald Holdaway, who, in concert with many teacher colleagues, had been implementing an integrated language arts approach in Australia for a few decades.[80]

Whole language. Important as they are, comprehension, literature-based reading, process writing, and integrated instruction pale in comparison to the impact of whole language, which is regarded as the most significant movement in reading curriculum in the last thirty years.[81] In fact, one might plausibly argue that whole language co-opted all four of these allied phenomena—comprehension, literature-based reading, integrated instruction and process writing—by incorporating them, problems along with strengths, into its fundamental set of principles and practices. Whole language is grounded in child-centered pedagogy reminiscent of the progressive education movement (the individual child is the most important curriculum informant).[82] Philosophically it is biased toward radical constructivist epistemology (all readers must construct their own meanings for the texts they encounter). Curricularly, it is committed to

authentic activity (real, not specially constructed, texts and tasks) and integration (both within the language arts and between the language arts and other subject matters). Politically, it is suspicious of all attempts to mandate and control curricular decisions beyond the classroom level; as such, it places great faith and hope in the wisdom of teachers to exercise professional prerogative in making decisions about the children in their care. Whole language owes its essential character and key principles to the insights of linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology, sociolinguistics, and literary theory detailed earlier. It owes its remarkable—if brief—appearance in the national limelight of reading instruction to its committed leaders and a veritable army of committed teachers who instantiated it in their classrooms, each with his or her own unique signature.[83]

When whole language emerged as a movement in the 80s, it challenged the conventional wisdom of basals and questioned the unqualified support for early code emphases that had grown between 1967 and the early 1980s.[84] One of the great ironies of whole language is that its ascendancy into curricular prominence is best documented by its influence on the one curricular tool it has most consistently and most vehemently opposed, the basal reader.[85] As suggested earlier, basals changed dramatically in the early 1990s, largely, I conjecture, in response to the groundswell of support within the teaching profession for whole language and its close curricular allies, literature-based reading and process writing.

Vocabulary control, already weakened during the 1970s in response to Chall's admonitions, was virtually abandoned in the early 1990s in deference to attempts to incorporate more literature, this time in unexpurgated form (i.e., without the practices of adaptation and excerpting that had characterized the basals of the 70s and 80s) into the grade 1 program.[86] Phonics, along with other skills, was backgrounded, and literature moved to center stage.

Basal programs appropriated or, as some whole language advocates have argued, "basalized" the activities and tools of whole language. Thus in the basals of the early 1990s, each unit might have a writing process component in which the rhetoric if not the reality of some version of process writing was presented to teachers and students. In the 1980s, comprehension questions, probably following a story line, might have sufficed for the guided reading section of the manual (the part that advises teachers on how to read and discuss the story), but in the 1990s, questions and tasks that supported deep probes into students' response to literature became more prevalent. Another concession to literature-based reading was the creation and marketing of classroom libraries—boxed sets of books, usually thematically related to each unit, that teachers could use to extend their lessons and units "horizontally" and enrich children's literary opportunities.

Basals also repositioned their "integrated language arts" and "integrated curriculum" strands. Dating back even to the 1920s and 1930s, basals had provided at least a "token" section in which teachers were encouraged to extend the themes or skills of the basal story into related writing (e.g., rewriting stories), oral language (e.g., transforming a story into a play and dramatizing it), or cross-curricular activities (e.g., conducting community surveys, tallying the results, and reporting them), but these forays were regarded as peripheral rather than core. In the basals of the early 1990s, as skills moved into the background,[87] these integrated language arts activities were featured more prominently as core lesson components.[88]

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These changes can, I believe, be traced to the prominent position of whole language as a curricular force during this period.[89] Publishers of basals accomplished this feat of appropriation not by ridding their programs of the skills of previous eras, but by subtle repositioning—foregrounding one component while backgrounding another, creating optional components or modules (e.g., an intensive phonics kit or a set of literature books) that could be added to give the program one or another spin. Unsurprisingly, this created bulkier teachers' manuals and more complex programs.

Acceptance of whole language was not universal. To the contrary, there was considerable resistance to whole language and literature-based reading throughout the country.[90] In many places, whole language never really gained a foothold. In others what was implemented in the name of whole language was not consistent with the philosophical and curricular principles of the movement; California, whole language advocates would argue, is a case in point. Whole language got conflated with whole class instruction and was interpreted to mean that all kids should get the same literature, even if teachers had to read it to them.[91]

Nor was there a single voice within the whole language movement. Whole language scholars and practitioners differ on a host of issues, such as the role of skills, conventions, and strategies within a language arts program. Some say, if we can just be patient, skills will emerge from meaningful communication activities; others spur things on by taking advantage of spontaneous opportunities for mini-lessons; still others are willing to spur spontaneity a bit.

Even so, it is fair to conclude that by the early 90s, whole language had become the conventional wisdom, the standard against which all else was referenced. The rhetoric of professional articles belies this change. As late as the mid-1980s, articles were written with the presumption of a different conventional wisdom—a world filled with skills, contrived readers, and workbooks. By 1991–92, they were written with the presumption that whole language reforms, while not fully ensconced in America's schools, were well on their way to implementation. The arguments in the 90s were less about first principles of whole language and more about fine-tuning teaching repertoires. The meetings of the Whole Language Umbrella grew to be larger than most large state conventions and regional conferences of the International Reading Association. By 1995, whole language was no longer a collection of guerrilla sorties into the land of skills and basals that characterized it through the mid 1980s. It had become the conventional wisdom, in rhetoric if not in reality.

Taking Stock: 4

Returning to the lenses outlined at the beginning of this essay (range of materials and practices, role of teacher, role of learner, and the processes of reading and learning to read), in whole language, we finally encountered major shifts in emphasis in comparison to what we found at the beginning of the century. In whole language, teachers were facilitators not tellers. They observes what children do, decide what they need, and arranged conditions to allow students to discover those very insights about reading, writing, and learning for themselves. Because this is truly child-centered pedagogy, learners occupied center stage. As Jerome Harste puts it, the child was the primary curriculum informant. Students were decision makers involved in choices about the books they read and stories they write. The materials of reading instruction were the materials of life and living--the books, magazines, newspapers, and other forms of print that children can

encounter in everyday life are the materials they should encounter in the classroom—no less, no more. There was no need for the sort of contrived texts and tasks of the sort found in basal reading programs. Instructional practices focused not on presenting a diet of skills carefully sequenced to achieve mastery but on creating activities and tasks that supported the learning students needed at a particular point in time. If skills and strategies were taught, they were taught in "mini-lessons," highly focused forays into the infrastructure of a skill or strategy followed up by immediately recontextualizing the skill in a genuine reading or writing situation. In contrast to previous periods, reading was now regarded as a meaning-making, not a perceptual, process. The reader was an active participant in creating, not a passive recipient of, the message in a text. The process of acquiring reading was also markedly different from the "readiness" perspective so dominant in the first eighty years of the century. Emergent literacy, the alternative to traditional reading readiness views, did not specify a "pre-reading" period in which children are prepared for the task of reading. All readers, at all stages, were meaning makers, even those who can only scribble a message or "pretend" read.[92] Thus, at century's end, reading pedagogy finally developed some viable alternatives to the conventional views of teacher, learner, and process that had dominated pedagogical practice for the entire century. As it turned out, the new directions were short-lived.

The Demise of Whole Language

At century's end, just when it appeared as if whole language, supported by its intellectual cousins (process writing, literature-based reading, and integrated curriculum), was about to assume the position of conventional wisdom for the field, the movement was challenged seriously, and the pendulum of the pedagogical debate began to swing back toward the skills end of the curriculum and instruction continuum. Several factors converged to make the challenge credible, among them (a) unintended curricular casualties of whole language, (b) questionable applications of whole language, (c) growing dissatisfaction with doctrinaire views of any sort, (d) a paradigm swing in the ideology of reading research, (e) increasing politicization of the reading research and policy agenda, and (f) increasing pressure for educators of all stripes, especially reading educators, to produce measurable results.

Unintended curricular consequences. In its ascendancy, whole language changed the face of reading instruction, and in the process, left behind some curricular casualties, few of which were intended by those who supported whole language. Those, myself included,[93] who supported practices that were discarded in the rise of whole language, had difficulty supporting the whole language movement even though we might have been philosophically and curricularly sympathetic to many of its principles and practices. This lack of enthusiasm from curricular moderates meant that whole language failed to build a base of support that was broad enough to survive even modest curricular opposition, let alone the political onslaught that it would experience at century's turn.

What were these casualties? I see at least four: skills instruction, strategy instruction, an emphasis on text structure, and reading in the content areas. Earlier, I suggested that one of the consequences of whole language was the relegation of skills to the "appendices" of instructional programs. In accepting whole language, we tacitly accepted the premise that skills are better *caught* in the act of reading and writing genuine texts for authentic purposes than *taught* directly

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and explicitly by teachers. The argument is the same for phonics, grammar, text conventions, and structural elements. These entities may be worthy of learning, but they are unworthy of teaching. This position presents us with a serious conundrum as a profession. Admit, for the sake of argument, that the skills instruction of the 1970s and earlier, with decontextualized lessons and practice on "textoids" in workbook pages, deserved the criticism accorded to it by whole language advocates (and scholars from other traditions). But a retreat from most skills instruction into a world of "authentic opportunity" did not provide a satisfactory answer for teachers and scholars who understood the positive impact that instruction can have. Many young readers do not "catch" the alphabetic principle by sheer immersion in print or by listening to others read aloud. For some it seems to require careful planning and hard work by dedicated teachers who are willing to balance systematic skills instruction with authentic texts and activities.[94]

Strategy instruction was another casualty. This loss has been particularly difficult for scholars who spent the better part of the early 1980s convincing basal publishers and textbook authors that the thoughtful teaching of flexible strategies for making and monitoring meaning was a viable alternative to mindless skills instruction, where skills were taught as though they were only every to be applied to workbook pages and end of unit tests. But the strategy lessons that filled our basals in the middle to late 1980s—direct advice from teachers about how to summarize what one has read, how to use text structure to infer relations among ideas, how to distinguish fact from opinion, how to determine the central thread of a story, how to use context to infer word meanings, and how to make and evaluate the accuracy of predictions—were virtually non-existent in the basals of the early to middle1990s. While there is no inherent bias in whole language or literature-based reading against the learning and use of a whole range of cognitive strategies, there is, as with phonics and grammar, a serious question about whether direct, explicit instruction in how to use them will help. The advice is to let them emerge from attempts to solve real reading problems and puzzles, the kind students meet in genuine encounters with authentic text. There may have been reason for concern about the strategy instruction of the 80s. But revision rather than rejection of these strategies was not a part of the rhetoric of whole language.[95]

Structural emphasis was also suspect within whole language. This suspicion extended to formal grammars, story grammars, rhetorical structures, and genre features of texts. As with skills and strategies, whole language reformers do not claim that students should not learn and develop control over these structural tools; they simply claim that, like skills, they are best inferred from reading and writing authentic texts in the process of making meaning. So, the advocates are comfortable in adopting Frank Smith's[96] admonition to encourage kids to read like a writer (meaning to read the text with a kind of critical eye toward understanding the tools and tricks of the trade that the author uses to make her points and achieve her effects on readers), but they would likely reject a systematic set of lessons designed to teach and assess children's control of story grammar elements (such as plot, characterization, style, mood, or theme) or some system for dealing with basic patterns of expository text. As with skills and strategies, many of us see a compromise alternative to both the formulaic approach of the early 1980s and the "discovery" approach of the new reforms-- dealing with these structural elements as they emanate from stories that a group is currently reading can provide some guidance and useful tools for students and teachers.

Content area reading also suffered during the ascendancy of whole language and literature-based reading. Content area texts—expository texts in general, but especially textbook-like entries—were not privileged in a world of literature-based reading. This is not an implicit criticism of the literature-based reading movement; rather it is a comment about the reallocation of curricular time and energy that occurs when a movement gains momentum. There is a certain irony in this development, for it is expository reading, not narrative reading, that most concerns middle and high school teachers. The cost here has been very dear. To enter middle school and high school classrooms in order to examine the role of expository text is to conclude that it has none. Occasionally teachers assign expository texts for homework, but when students come to class the next day, clearly having avoided the assignment, teachers provide them with an oral version of what they would have gotten out of the text if they had bothered to read it. Most high school teachers have quite literally given up on the textbook for the communication of any important content. While understandable, this approach is, of course, ultimately counterproductive. There comes a time in the lives of students—either when they go to college or enter the world of work—when others expect them to read and understand informational texts on their own and in printed form rather than through oral or video transformation.[97]

Because whole language did not go out of its way to accommodate any of these curricular practices, those who were sympathetic with whole language but also champions of one or another approach were not available to help whole language respond to the criticism leveled at it in the late 1990s.

Questionable applications of whole language. One of dilemmas faced by any curricular challenge is sustaining the integrity of the movement without imposing the very sorts of controls it is trying to eliminate. Whole language has not found a satisfying way of managing this dilemma, and it has suffered as a consequence. Many schools, teachers, and institutions appropriated the whole language label without honoring its fundamental principles of authenticity, integration, and empowerment. Basal reader publishers made the most obvious and widespread appropriation, some even positioning their basal series as "whole language" programs. Earlier, I noted another misapplication in which whole language was confounded with whole-class instruction. Nowhere was this conflation more extreme than in the implementation of the California literature framework. The logic that prevailed in many classrooms was that it was better to keep the entire class together, all experiencing the same texts, even if it meant that the teacher had to read the text to those children who lacked the skills to read it on their own. Implicit in this practice are two interesting assumptions: (1) that getting the content of the stories is the most important goal for reading instruction, and (2) that the skills and processes needed to read independently will emerge somehow from this environment in which many students are pulled through texts that far exceed the grasp of their current skills repertoire. Needless to say, whole language had enough on its hands dealing with its own assumptions and practices; these philosophical and curricular misapplications exposed the movement to a whole set of criticisms that derived from practices not of its own making.

One of the primary reasons for misapplication of whole language is, in my view, the lack of an explicit plan for professional development. Whole language gives teachers a wide berth for making curricular and instructional decisions, for whole classes and for individual children. It assumes that teachers who are empowered, sincere, and serious about their personal professional development will be able to tailor programs and activities to the needs and interests of individual

children. Such an approach makes sense only when we can assume that teacher knowledge is widely and richly distributed in our profession. To offer these prerogatives in the face of narrow and shallow knowledge is to guarantee that misguided practices, perversions of the very intent of the movement, will be widespread. The puzzle, of course, is where to begin the reform—by ensuring that the knowledge precedes the prerogative, or by ceding the prerogative to teachers as a way of leveraging their motivation for greater knowledge.[98]

Growing dissatisfaction with extreme positions. While it has reached its peak in the last five years, concern about extreme positions, be they extremely child-centered (such as the more radical of whole language approaches) or extremely curriculum-centered (such as highly structured, unswerving phonics programs) is not new. Voices from the middle, extolling balanced approaches or rationalizing the eclectic practices of teachers, began to be heard even in the earliest days of whole language's ascendancy.[99] Scholars and teachers raised a number of concerns about the assumptions and practices of the whole language movement. Most importantly, they expressed concern about the consequences of whole language outlined earlier in this essay. They questioned the assumption that skills are best "caught" during the pursuit of authentic reading activity rather than "taught" directly and explicitly. They also questioned the insistence on authentic texts and the corollary ban on "instructional" texts written to permit the application of skills within the curriculum. They questioned the zeal and commitment of the movement qua movement, with its strong sense of insularity and exclusivity. Finally, they worried that the press toward the use of authentic literature and literature-based reading would eradicate, albeit unintentionally, what little progress had been made toward the use of informational texts and teaching reading in the content areas.[100]

Ironically, in the past few years, these voices from the middle have found themselves responding not to those who hold a radical whole language position, but to those who hold steadfastly to the phonics first position. Even so, the fact that those with centrist positions were not inclined to defend whole language when the political campaign against it began in the middle 1990s undoubtedly hastened the demise of whole language as the pretender to the title of conventional wisdom.

Changing research ideology. Prior to the 1980s, qualitative research in any form had little visibility within the reading research community. Among the array of qualitative efforts, only miscue analysis[101] and some early forays into sociolinguistic and anthropological accounts of literacy had achieved much in the way of archival status.[102] But all that changed in the 1980s and early 1990s. Qualitative research more generally, along with more specific lines of inquiry taking a critical perspective on literacy as a social and pedagogical phenomenon, became more widely accepted as part of the mainstream archival literature.[103] Treatises pointing out the shortcomings of traditional forms of quantitative inquiry, especially experimental research, appeared frequently in educational research journals.[104] In terms of curriculum and pedagogy, it is important to remind ourselves that much of the research that undergirds whole language comes from this more qualitative, more interpretive, more critical tradition. Thus the credibility of this type of research increased in concert with the influence of whole language as a curricular movement.

Somewhere in the mid-1990s, the discourse of literacy research began to take a new turn. Stimulated by research supported by the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development, a "new" brand of experimental work began to appear, beginning in the middle

1980s and gathering momentum that has reached a peak in the past year or two.[105] This is experimentalism reborn from the 1950s and 60s, with great emphasis placed upon "reliable, replicable research," large samples, random assignment of treatments to teachers and/or schools, and tried and true outcome measures.[106] This work does not build upon the qualitative tradition of the 80s and early 90s; instead it finds its aegis in the experimental rhetoric of science and medicine and in the laboratory research that has examined reading as a perceptual process.[107] Although not broadly accepted by the reading education community (at least as of the time when this chapter was put to bed in 1999), this work has found a very sympathetic ear in the public policy arena.[108]

The political positioning of this research is important, but so is its substance. Two themes from this work have been particularly important in shaping a new set of instructional practices—phonemic awareness and phonics instruction.

The absolutely critical role played by phonemic awareness (the ability to *segment* the speech stream of a spoken word, e.g., /cat/ into component phonemes /cuh + ah + tuh/ and/or to *blend* separately heard sounds, e.g., /cuh + ah + tuh/ into a normally spoken word /cat/) in the development of the ability to decode and to read for meaning has been well documented in the past decade and a half.[109] Irrespective of mode of instruction, the overwhelming evidence suggests that phonemic awareness is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the development of decoding and reading. First, children who possess high degrees of phonemic awareness in kindergarten or early in first grade are very likely to be good readers throughout their elementary school careers.[110] Second, almost no children who are successful readers at the end of grade one exhibit a low level of mastery of phonemic awareness. On the other hand, a substantial proportion of unsuccessful end-of-grade-one readers possess better than average phonemic awareness; this evidence is the critical piece in establishing that phonemic awareness is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for reading success. While we can be confident of its critical role in learning to read, we are less sure about the optimal way to enhance its development. Many scholars have documented the efficacy of teaching it directly, but they also admit that it is highly likely to develop as a consequence of learning phonics, learning to read, or especially learning to write, especially when teachers encourage students to use invented spellings.[111] Research in whole language classrooms suggests that writing is the medium through which both phonemic awareness and phonics knowledge develop—the former because students have to segment the speech stream of spoken words in order to focus on a phoneme and the latter because there is substantial transfer value from the focus on sound-symbol information in spelling to symbol-sound knowledge in reading.[112]

The second consistent thread in the new experimentalism of the 1990s is the simple but undeniable emphasis on the code in the early stages of learning to read. Reminiscent of Chall's earlier conclusions, scholars in this tradition tend to advocate phonics, first, fast, and simple.[113] Less well documented, and surely less well agreed upon, is the optimal course of instruction to facilitate phonics development. Even Gough, a classic bottom-up theorist, while arguing that what distinguishes the good reader from the poor reader is swift and accurate word identification, suggests that an early insistence on reading for meaning may be the best way to develop such decoding proficiency. Both Philip Gough and Connie Juel are convinced that students can learn how to read when they have "cryptoanalytic intent" (a disposition to decipher the specific letter-

to-sound codes), phonemic awareness, an appreciation of the alphabetic principle (i.e., regardless of the numerous exceptions, letters do stand for sounds), and "data" (some texts to read and someone to assist when the going gets tough).[114]

After reviewing available instructional evidence, two of the most respected scholars in this tradition, Marilyn Adams and Connie Juel, independently concluded that children can and should learn the "cipher" through a combination of explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and letter-sound correspondences, a steady insistence on invented spellings as the route to conventional spellings in writing activities, lots of opportunity to read connected text (especially when the texts contain enough decodable words to allow students to apply the phonics information they are learning through explicit instruction). Both of these reviewers, known for their sympathies toward instruction in the code, are quick to add that rich experiences with language, environmental print, patterned stories, and "Big Books" should also be a staple of effective early reading instruction.[115]

Politicization of the reading research and policy agenda. One of the great hopes of educational researchers is that policymakers will take research seriously when they establish policy initiatives at a local, state, or national level. After all, the improvement of educational practice is the ultimate goal of educational research, and policy is our society's most transparent tool for educational improvement. Historically, however, research has been regarded as one among many information sources consulted in policy formation—including expert testimony from practitioners, information about school organization and finance, and evaluations of compelling cases. In the past half decade research, at least selective bits of research, has never been taken more seriously. Several laws in California make direct references to research. For example, in 1998 Assembly Bill 1086 prohibited the use of Goals 2000 money for professional developers who advocated the use of context clues over phonics or supported the use of inventive (sic) spellings in children's writing. The federally sponsored Reading Excellence Act of 1999, which allocated $240,000,000 for staff development in reading, requires that both state and local applications for funding base their programs on research that meets scientifically rigorous standards. The "scientifically rigorous" phrase was a late entry; in all but the penultimate version of the bill, the phrase was "reliable, replicable research," which had been interpreted as a code word for experimental research. As of early 1999, "phonics bills" (bills mandating either the use of phonics materials or some sort of teacher training to acquaint teachers with knowledge of the English sound symbol system and its use in teaching) had been passed or were pending in 36 states.[116]

Policymakers like to shroud mandates and initiatives in the rhetoric of science, and sometimes that practice results in very strained, if not indefensible, extrapolations from research. This has happened consistently in the current reading policy arena. Two examples make the point vividly. First, California Assembly bill 1086, with its prohibition on context clues and invented spelling, represents an ironic application of research to policy. The irony stems from the fact that many of the advocates of a return to code emphasis, such as Marilyn Adams, read the research as supporting the use of invented spellings in the development of phonemic awareness and phonics.[117] Second, the mandate in several states calling for the use of decodable text (usually defined as text consisting of words that could be sounded out using a combination of the phonics rules taught up to that point in the program *plus* some instant recognition of a few highly frequent "sight" words) is based upon the thinnest of research bases. The idea is that children

will learn to use their phonics better, faster, and more efficiently if the texts they read permit facile application of the principles they are learning. While it all sounds very logical, there is precious little research evidence to support the systematic and exclusive use of decodable text.[118] This lack of evidence, however, does not seem to have doused (which do you like better) the policy fires on this matter.

Professional groups have entered the policy fray in recent years. For example, the American Federation of Teachers has endorsed a particular set of programs as scientifically validated to produce excellent results. Interestingly, each of the programs on their endorsed list is committed to early, systematic, explicit phonics instruction in a highly structured framework. The AFT influence is evident in some other professional movements, such as the Learning First Alliance.[119]

When research moves into the policy arena, one of two outcomes are most likely. If the research is widely accepted by members of the profession from which it comes, widespread acceptance and implementation usually follows. This often occurs in medical, pharmaceutical, or agricultural research. If widespread consensus on what the research says about practice is not reached, then research-based policy initiatives are likely to sharpen and deepen the schisms that already exist, and the whole enterprise is likely to be regarded as a "war" among Balkanized factions within the field. The latter scenario appears to characterize the reading field.[120]

Interestingly, the debate, accompanied by its warlike metaphors, appears to have more life in the public and professional press than it does in our schools. Reporters and scholars revel in keeping the debate alive and well, portraying clearly divided sides and detailing a host of differences of a philosophical, political, and pedagogical nature.[121] Teachers, by contrast, often talk about, and more importantly enact, more balanced approaches. For example, several scholars, in documenting the practices of highly effective, highly regarded teachers, found that these exemplary teachers employed a wide array of practices, some of which appear decidedly whole language in character (e.g., process writing, literature groups, and contextualized skills practice) and some of which appear remarkably skills-oriented, (explicit phonics lessons, sight word practice, and comprehension strategy instruction).[122]

Producing measurable results. Evaluation has always posed a conundrum for whole language supporters. First, some oppose the use of any sort of externally mandated or administered assessments as a matter of principle, holding that assessment is ultimately the responsibility of a teacher in collaboration with a student and his or her parents. Second, even those supporters who are open to external forms of accountability, or at least reporting outside the boundaries of the classroom or school, often claim that standardized tests, state assessments, and other external measures of student accomplishment do not provide sensitive indicators of the goals of curricula based upon whole language principles. Most appealing would be assessments that are classroom-based and individualized in nature, with the option of aggregating these sorts of data at the classroom and school levels when accountability comes knocking. During the 1990s, many felt that the increased emphasis on performance assessment and portfolios would fill this need.[123] In an age of high expectations, explicit standards, and school and classroom level accountability, none of these options is a good fit with the views and desires of policymakers and the public. Both of these constituents seem quite uneasy about the quality of our schools and our educational system, so uneasy that leaving assessment in the hands of our teachers seems an unlikely

outcome. It is not at all clear to me that the proponents of at least strong versions of whole language can, or will be willing to, hold themselves accountable to the sorts of measures that the public and policymakers find credible.

Who holds the high ground? One other factor, both subtle and speculative (on my part) seems to be an undercurrent in the current rhetoric. Whole language has always privileged the role of the teacher as the primary curriculum decision-maker. Teachers, the argument goes, are in the best position to serve this important role because of their vast knowledge of language and literacy development, their skills as diagnosticians (they are expert "kidwatchers"), and the materials and teaching strategies they have at their disposal. And in the arguments against more structured approaches, this is exactly the approach whole language advocates have taken: "Don't make these decisions at the state, district, or even the school level. Arm teachers with the professional prerogative (and corollary levels of professional knowledge) they need in order to craft unique decisions for individual children." While this may seem a reasonable, even admirable position, it has recently been turned into an apology for self-serving teacher ideology.[124] The counter argument suggests that the broad base of privilege accorded to teachers may come at the expense of students and their parents. Thus, those who advocate a strong phonics-first position often take the moral high ground: "We are doing this for America's children (and for YOUR child!)—so that they have the right to read for themselves." Even if one opposes this rhetorical move, it is hard not to appreciate the clever repositioning on the part of those who want to return to more phonics and skills.

Taken together, these factors create a policy environment in which whole language seems unlikely to flourish as the mainstream approach to teaching reading and writing. In the final analysis, however, I believe that the reluctance to own up to the "measurable results" standards is the Achilles heel for whole language. If whole language advocates were willing to play by the rules of external accountability, to assert that students who experience good instruction based upon solid principles of progressive pedagogy will perform well on standardized tests and other standards of performance, they would stand a better chance of gaining a sympathetic ear with the public and with policymakers. And as long as the criteria for what counts as evidence for growth and accomplishment are vague or left to individual teachers, the public will continue to question the movement; they will continue to wonder whose interests are being served by an unwillingness to commit to common standards.

Looking Ahead: Will We Benefit from the Lessons of History?

So where has this journey left us? And where will it take us next? We are, as Regie Routman suggests, at a crossroads.[125] Many recent developments suggest that we are retreating to a more familiar, more comfortable paradigm in which phonics, skills, and controlled text dominate our practices. Other developments suggest that we are on the verge of a new paradigm, a hybrid that weds some of the principles of whole language (integrated instruction and authentic texts and tasks) with some of the traditions of earlier eras (explicit attention to skills and strategies, some vocabulary control of early readers, and lots of early emphasis on the code) in an "ecologically balanced" approach to reading instruction.[126] The most cynical amongst us might even argue that we are just riding the natural swing of a pendulum that will, if we have the patience, take us back to whole language, or whatever its child-centered descendant turns out to be, in a decade or so.

Before making a prediction about the direction the field will take, let me play out the first two scenarios, phonics first and balanced reading instruction.

One Alternative for the Future

If those who have advocated most strongly for a return to phonics and a heavy skills orientation have their way—if they are able to influence federal, state, and local policy as well as the educational publishing industry—we will experience moderate to substantial shifts on most, but not all, of the criteria I put forward as lenses for tracking changes in reading pedagogy over this century (range of materials, range of pedagogical practices, role of teacher, role of student, underlying theory of reading and reading acquisition). As I read their views about policy and practice, the greatest changes will occur at the very earliest stages of learning to read—kindergarten and grade 1. They suggest explicit instruction on phonemic awareness and phonics, with a strong preference for decodable texts in the early grades. When it comes to writing, literature, response, and comprehension, they seem quite content to cede curricular authority to the practices that emerged during the 80s and early 90s, those associated with whole language, literature-based reading, and process writing.[127] Thus, looking broadly at the entire elementary reading curriculum (the range of materials and the range of pedagogical practices), things might, on the surface, look similar to the early 1990s, with some retreat to the 1980s, especially in terms of skill and strategy instruction.

But beneath that curricular surface, major changes would have occurred. For example, the role of the teacher and the learner would have reverted to what they were at the beginning of the century. The role of the teacher would be to transmit the received knowledge of the field, as reflected in research-based curricular mandates, to students. Students would eventually be regarded as active meaning makers, but only after they had received the tools of decoding from their teachers. The greatest changes of all would have taken place in the underlying model of reading and reading acquisition. The simple view of reading (RC = Dec * LC) would have returned in full force, and the job of young readers would be to acquire the decoding knowledge they lack when they begin to learn to read.

A Second Alternative

If those who are pushing for ecological balance carry the day, the field will experience less dramatic shifts. A balanced approach will privilege authentic texts and tasks, a heavy emphasis on writing, literature, response, and comprehension, but it will also call for an ambitious program of explicit instruction for phonics, word identification, comprehension, spelling, and writing. A balanced approach is likely to look like some instantiations of whole language from the early 90s, but recalibrated to redress the unintended curricular consequences outlined earlier in this chapter. Major differences between a balanced approach and the new phonics are likely to manifest themselves most vividly in kindergarten and grade 1, where a rich set of language and literacy experiences would provide the context from which teachers would carve out scaffolded instructional activities to spotlight necessary skills and strategies—phonemic awareness, letter-sound knowledge, concepts of print, and conceptual development. Thus instruction, while focused and explicit, would also be highly contextualized.

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Beneath the curricular surface, balanced approaches seem to share slightly more in common, at least on a philosophical plane, with whole language than with new phonics approaches. The teacher is both facilitator and instructor. The teacher facilitates learning by establishing authentic activities, intervening where necessary to provide the scaffolding and explicit instruction required to help students take the next step toward independence. The student is, as in whole language, an active meaning maker from day one of preschool. Reading is a process of constructing meaning in response to texts encountered in a specific context, and the emergent literacy metaphor, not the readiness metaphor, characterizes the acquisition process.

An Ecologically Balanced Approach

Just in case my personal bias has not emerged, let me declare it unequivocally. I favor the conceptual map of the ecologically balanced approach. There are several reasons for favoring this stance. First, my reading of the research points to the balanced curricular position, not to the new phonics position, both at a theoretical and a pedagogical level. I do not see much support for the simple view of reading underlying the new phonics; readers do construct meaning, they don't just find it lying there in the text. Regarding pedagogical research, my reading requires me to side with Chall's view that while some sort of early, focused, and systematic emphasis on the code is called for, no particular approach can be singled out. And while I readily accept the findings of the phonemic awareness research, I do not read them as supporting drill and practice approaches to this important linguistic understanding; to the contrary, highly embedded approaches, such as invented spelling, are equally as strongly implicated in the research.[128]

Second, an ecologically balanced approach is more respectful of the entire range of research in our field. It does not have to exclude major research paradigms or methodological approaches to sustain its integrity.

Third, an ecologically balanced approach also respects the wisdom of practice. It is no accident that studies of exemplary teachers, those who are respected by their peers and nurture high student achievement, consistently find that they exhibit a balanced repertoire of instructional strategies. Teachers who are faced with the variations in achievement, experience, and aptitude found in today's classrooms apparently need, and deserve, a full tool box.

Finally, an ecologically balanced approach respects our professional history. It retains the practices that have proved useful from each era but transforms and extends them, rendering them more effective, more useful, and more supportive of teachers and students. And it may represent our only alternative to the pendulum-swing view of our pedagogical history that seems to have plagued the field of reading for most of this century. A transformative rather than a cyclical view of progress would be a nice start for a new century.

NOTES

[1] The work reported herein was supported in part under the Education Research and Development Centers Program PR/Award Number R305R70004, as administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the National Institute on Student Achievement, Curriculum, and Assessment or the National Institute on Early Childhood Development, or the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

This paper first appeared in the *NSSE Yearbook*, and is reproduced here with the permission of the author. Pearson, P. D. (2000). Reading in the 20th century. In T. Good (Ed.), *American Education: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow. Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education* (pp. 152–208). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[2] See Mitford Matthews, *Teaching to Read* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) for an account of the contributions of both these reformers.

[3] See Edmund Burke Huey, *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading* (New York: Macmillan, 1908) for an extensive account of the methods that prevailed at the last turn of the century.

[4] Noah Webster, *The American Spelling Book* (Boston: Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer Andrews, 1798) was first published a little over two centuries ago. The first of William H. McGuffey's *Eclectic Readers* appeared between 1836 and 1840; for example, William H. McGuffey, *Eclectic Fourth Reader* (Cincinnati: Truman and Smith, 1838). Both were still available for purchase in 1900.

[5] Many of the textbooks of the last half of the 19th century explicitly emphasized elocution in the textbooks for the upper elementary grades. See Mathews, *Teaching to Read*.

[6] The simple view is a term coined by Philip Gough most probably as a rhetorical counter to the rampant complexity in theories and models of reading developed in the 1970s. See Philip B. Gough and M. L. Hillinger, "Learning to Read: An Unnatural Act," *Bulletin of the Orton Society* 30 (1980): 171–176.

[7] Matthews, *Teaching to Read*.

[8] Matthews, *Teaching to Read*, documents many cases of this general approach to the reform of reading pedagogy dating back to the 1840s in the United States and to the 17th Century in Germany.

[9] For example, in his popular 1955 book, *Why Johnny Can't Read*, Rudolph Flesch argued that the primary cause of low reading performance during the 1940s and 1950s was the failure of our schools to teach phonics because of the strong grip of the look-say approach on our nation's teachers and textbook authors.

[10] The very best description of the "state of the art" in early reading appears in Huey, *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading*.

[11] A wonderful example of this approach from the University of Chicago laboratory school appears in Huey, *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading*.

[12] See Daniel P. Resnick, "History of Educational Testing," *Ability Testing: Uses, Consequences, and Controversies, Volume 2*, eds. A. K. Wigdor and W. R. Garner (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1982).

[13] A useful account of the assessments dominant in the first third of the century can be found in Gertrude Hildreth, *Bibliography of Mental Tests and Rating Scales* (New York: The Psychological Corporation, 1933).

[14] This tradition of isomorphism between the infrastructure of tests and curriculum has been a persistent issue throughout the century. See, for example, Dale D. Johnson and P. David Pearson, "Skills Management Systems: A Critique," *The Reading Teacher*, 1975; and Resnick, "History of Educational Testing." Also see Nila Banton Smith,

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American Reading Instruction (Newark, DE, 1966): 180–186, for an account of the expansion of reading comprehension as a curricular phenomenon.

[15] See Smith, *American Reading Instruction*, 259–262, for an account of the emergence of child-centered reading pedagogy. Foundational thinkers for this movement were Johann H. Pestalozzi, *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children* (Syracuse, NY: C. W. Barden Publisher, 1898); Freidrich Froebel, *The Education of Man* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1887); John F. Herbart, *Outlines of Educational Doctrine* (New York: Macmillan, 1990).

[16] Ironically, it was the field's most ambitious effort in readability by Bormuth in 1966 that provided the closing parenthesis on this 40-year enterprise. John R. Bormuth, "Readability: A New Approach," *Reading Research Quarterly 1*(1966): 79–132.

[17] Smith, *American Reading Instruction*, 259–262.

[18] Ibid, 355–56.

[19] Even as recently as the influential National Academy of Science Report published in 1998, letter-name knowledge once again emerged as the best predictor of later achievement: Catherine Snow, Susan Burns, and Peg Griffith, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1998).

[20] M. V. Morphett and Carlton Washburne, "When Should Children Begin to Read?" *Elementary School Journal 31* (1931): 496–501. Arthur I. Gates, "The Necessary Mental Age for Beginning Reading," *Elementary School Journal* (1937): 497–498.

[21] See also Benjamin Bloom and Ralph Tyler for accounts of the influence of tests on curriculum: Benjamin Bloom, "Learning for Mastery," *Evaluation Comment*, 1 (1968); Ralph Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949).

[22] Smith, *American Reading Instruction*, 208–209. By the 1940s, they had expanded to more than 500 pages per student book.

[23] Smith, *American Reading Instruction*, 208–229.

[24] Smith, *American Reading Instruction*, 231–239.

[25] The first book on remedial reading was published in 1922: Clarence T. Gray, *Deficiencies in Reading Ability: Their Diagnosis and Treatment* (Boston: D. C. Heath & Company, 1922). One of the most influential scholars of disability was Arthur I. Gates, *The Improvement of Reading* (New York: Macmillan, 1935).

[26] Nowhere is this tension better illustrated than in the contrast between Morphett and Washburne, "When Should Children Begin to Read?" and Gates, "The Necessary Mental Age for Beginning Reading."

[27] Mary C. Austin and Coleman Morrison, *The First R.* (New York: Macmillan, 1963).

[28] This account is taken from Jeanne Chall, *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1967): 13–15.

[29] Smith, *American Reading Instruction*, 276.

[30] Guy L. Bond and Robert Dykstra, "The Cooperative Research Program in First Grade Reading Instruction," *Reading Research Quarterly, 2*: entire issue.

[31] The reporting of data for students through grade 2 did not receive the fanfare that the first grade report did, an outcome which I find unfortunate because it was, in many ways, even more interesting. It showed stronger effects overall for code-based approaches, and it revealed the most provocative of all the findings in this entire enterprise—the project effect. The project effect was this: using analysis of covariance to control incoming performance, students were better off being in the poorest performing approach in project A than they were being in the best performing approach in Project B. This raises the whole issue of impact of contextual factors on reading

achievement. See Robert Dykstra, "Summary of the Second-grade Phase of the Cooperative Research Program in Primary Reading Instruction," *Reading Research Quarterly, 4* (1968): 49–70.

[32] If we were focusing on the impact of these studies on research rather than practice, these issues would occupy more of our attention. In a sense the First Grade Studies created an opening for other research endeavors; indeed, the directions that reading research took in the middle 70s—the nature of comprehension and the role of the teacher—suggest that there were groups of scholars ready to seize the opportunity.

[33] When large-scale experiments returned in the early 1990s, it was not the Department of Education, but the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, that led the renaissance. For accounts of the development of the NICHD effort, See G. Reid Lyon, "Research Initiatives in Learning Disabilities: Contributions from Scientists Supported by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development," *Journal of Child Neurology 10*: 120–127, or G. Reid Lyon and V. Chhaba, "The Current State of Science and the Future of Specific Reading Disability," *Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews 2*: 2–9. It is also worth noting that one of the likely reasons for the demise of Method A vs. Method B experiments is that scholars in the 1960s were looking for main effects rather than interaction effects. Had they set out to find that methods are uniquely suited to particular populations in this work, they might not have rejected them so completely.

[34] The impact of Chall's book, particularly the phonics recommendation, was documented by Helen Popp, "Current Practices in the Teaching of Beginning Reading," *Toward a Literate Society: The Report of the Committee on Reading of the National Academy of Education*, ed., John B. Carroll and Jeanne S. Chall (New York: McGraw Hill, 1975).

[35] In an unpublished research study completed in 1978, Hansen and Pearson found two- and three-fold increases in the number of words introduced in the first grade books for the popular series published by Scott Foresman and Ginn. Jane Hansen and P. David Pearson, "Learning to Read: A Decade after Chall," unpublished manuscript, University of Minnesota.

[36] The teachers' manuals of the Ginn 360 program provide the most notable example of this new trend. See Clymer, et al, Ginn 360 (Lexington, MA: Ginn & Company, 1968)

[37] Mastery learning can trace its intellectual roots to works of Benjamin Bloom and John Carroll: Benjamin Bloom, "Learning for Mastery, " *Evaluation Comment 1* (1968): entire issue; John Carroll, "A Model of School Learning," *Teachers College Record 64* (1963): 723–732.

[38] For an account of criterion-referenced assessment as it emerged during this period, see James Popham, *Criterion-referenced Measurement*. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978).

[39] Stanley L. Deno, "Curriculum Based Measurement: The Emerging Alternative," *Exceptional Children 52* (1985): 219–232.

[40] Bloom, "Learning for Mastery."

[41] The most popular of these systems was the Wisconsin Design for Reading Skill Development, followed closely by Fountain Valley. Their heyday was the decade of the 1970s, although they remained a staple, as an option, through the 80s and 90s and are still available as options in today's basals. For an account of the rationale behind these systems, see Wayne Otto, "The Wisconsin Design, A Reading Program for Individually Guided Education," *Individually Guided Elementary Education: Concepts and Practices*, eds., Herbert J. Klausmeier, Robert A. Rossmiller, and M. Saily (New York: Academic Press, 1977). For a critique of these programs during their ascendancy, see Johnson and Pearson, "Skills Management Systems."

[42] This is not to say that there were no challengers to the conventional wisdom that emerged in the middle of the century. To the contrary, the alphabetic approach, now dubbed synthetic phonics, lived a healthy life as a small guerilla force throughout the period, as did the language experience approach and a few assorted alternatives. See Chall, *Learning to Read*, and Mathews, *Teaching to Read*, for accounts of these programs.

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[43] It should be noted that a major child-centered reform movement, the open classroom, was creating quite a wave in educational circles and elementary schools throughout the United States in the early 1970s. It is hard, however, to find any direct impact of the open classroom movement on reading instruction. However, one could make the argument that the open classroom philosophy had a delayed impact in its influence on the whole language movement in the late 1980s.

[44] Some portions of the text in this section appeared in modified form in P. David Pearson and Diane Stephens, "Learning About Literacy: A 30-year Journey," *Elementary Reading: Process and Practice 4–18*, eds., Christine J. Gordon, George D. Labercane, and W. R. McEachern (Boston: Ginn Press, 1993). (Sections adapted with the knowledge and permission of the coauthor and publisher.)

[45] To assert that Chomsky laid the groundwork for an essential critique of behaviorism as an explanatory model for language processes is not to assert that he drove behaviorism out of psychology or education.

[46] See Roger Brown, *Psycholinguistics* (New York: Macmillan: 1970) for an account of this view of language development.

[47] Kenneth G. Goodman, "A linguistic study of cues and miscues in reading," *Elementary English*, *42*, 639–643; Kenneth G. Goodman, "Reading: A psycholinguistic guessing game," *Journal of the Reading Specialist*, *4*: 126–135.

[48] Frank Smith, *Understanding Reading: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of Reading and Learning to Read* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1971).

[49] In all fairness, it must be admitted that this contribution was not exclusively Smith's. As we shall point out in later sections, many other scholars, most notably David Rumelhart and Richard Anderson, championed constructivist views of reading. It is fair, however, to say that Smith was the first scholar to bring this insight into the reading field. David Rumelhart, "Schemata: The Building Blocks of Cognition," *Theoretical Issues in Reading Comprehension*, eds., Rand J. Spiro, Bertram C. Bruce, and William F. Brewer (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1980). Richard C. Anderson and P. David Pearson, "A schema-theoretic view of basic processes in reading comprehension," eds., P. David Pearson, Rebecca Barr, Michael L. Kamil, and Peter Mosenthal, *Handbook of Reading Research* (New York: Longman, 1984).

[50] Frank Smith, "Reading Like a Writer," *Language Arts*, *60* (1983): 558–567.

[51] During this period, great homage was paid to intellectual ancestors such as Edmund Burke Huey, who as early as 1908 recognized the cognitive complexity of reading. Voices such as Huey's, unfortunately, were not heard during the period from 1915 to 1965 when behaviorism dominated psychology and education.

[52] Walter Kintsch and Bonnie Meyer wrote compelling accounts of the structure of exposition that were translated by others (e.g., Barbara Taylor and Richard Beach) into instructional strategies. See Walter Kintsch, *The Representation of Meaning in Memory* (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1974); Bonnie J. F. Meyer, *The Organization of Prose and Its Effects on Memory* (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing, 1975); Barbara M. Taylor and Richard Beach, "The Effects of Text Structure Instruction on Middle-grade Students' Comprehension and Production of Expository Text," *Reading Research Quarterly 19*: (134–146).

[53] The most complete accounts of schema theory are provided by Rumelhart, "Schemata: The Building Blocks of Cognition," and Anderson and Pearson, "A Schema-Theoretic View of Basic Processes in Reading Comprehension."

[54] Frederic C. Bartlett, *Remembering*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932)

[55] It is not altogether clear that schema theory is dead, especially in contexts of practice. Its role in psychological theory is undoubtedly diminished due to attacks on its efficacy as a model of memory and cognition. See Timothy P. McNamara, Diana L. Miller, and John D. Bransford, "Mental Models and Reading Comprehension," *Handbook of Reading Research, Vol. 2*, eds., Rebecca Barr, Michael Kamil, Peter Mosenthal, and P. David Pearson. (New York: Longman, 1991): 490–511.

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[56] For early accounts of this perspective, see Joan Baratz and Roger Shuy, *Teaching Black Children to Read* (Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1969). William Labov, *Language of the Inner City*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972).

[57] Baratz and Shuy, *Teaching Black Children to Read*.

[58] See David Bloome and Judith Greene, "Directions in the Sociolinguistic Study of Reading," *Handbook of Reading Research, Vol. 2:* 395–421.

[59] Louise Rosenblatt, *Literature as Exploration*. (New York: Appleton Century Croft, 1936/1978). Louise Rosenblatt, *Reader, Text, and Poem* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press: 1978).

[60] Rosenblatt credits the idea of transaction to John Dewey, who discussed it in many texts, including *Experience and Education* (New York: Kappa Delta Pi, 1938).

[61] A very interesting, even provocative attempt to understand comprehension processes appears in Edward L. Thorndike, "Reading as reasoning: A study of mistakes in paragraph reading," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 8: 323–332. The classic reference for using tests to reveal the psychological infrastructure of comprehension is the first published factor analysis of reading comprehension by Frederick Davis, "Fundamental Factors of Reading Comprehension," *Psychometrika, 9* (1944): 185–197.

[62] *Sixty-seventh Yearbook (1968), Part II, Innovation and Change in Reading Instruction*, edited by Helen M. Robinson.

[63] Dolores Durkin published an infamous study in 1978 documenting the fact that what went on in the name of comprehension was essentially completing worksheets and answering questions during story discussions. She saw almost no instruction about how to engage in any sort of comprehension task—no modeling, no demonstration, no scaffolding. Dolores Durkin, "What Classroom Observations Reveal about Reading Instruction," *Reading Research Quarterly 14*: 481–533.

[64] Among the most notable efforts at the Center were the classic work on reciprocal teaching: Annemarie Palincsar and Ann L. Brown, "Reciprocal teaching of comprehension fostering and monitoring activities," *Cognition and Instruction, 1* (1984): 117–175; T. E. Raphael and P. D. Pearson, "Increasing students' awareness of sources of information for answering questions," *American Educational Research Journal, 22*: 217–236; and explicit comprehension instruction as a general approach in P. D. Pearson and J. Dole, "Explicit comprehension instruction: A review of research and a new conceptualization of instruction," *Elementary School Journal, 88* no. 2: 151–165. P. D. Pearson, "Changing the face of reading comprehension instruction," *The Reading Teacher, 38*: 724–738. This focus on comprehension and reasoning while reading continues even today at the Center with the work of Anderson and his colleagues.

[65] The work of Paris and his colleagues is exemplary in the area of metacognitive training and comprehension monitoring (S. G. Paris, D. R. Cross, & M. Y. Lipson, "Informed strategies for learning: A program to improve children's reading awareness and comprehension," *Journal of Educational Psychology, 76*: 1239–1252).

[66] Michael Pressley, working in conjunction with a group of professionals in Montgomery County, Maryland, developed a set of powerful comprehension routines that, among other things, extended the four strategies of Reciprocal Teaching (questioning, summarizing, clarifying and predicting) to include more aspects of literary response (e.g., personal response and author's craft). The best resource on this line of pedagogical research is a 1993 volume of *Elementary School Journal* edited by Pressley, along with these articles, one of which is from that volume: M. Pressley, et al., "Transactional instruction of comprehension strategies: The Montgomery County, Maryland, SAIL Program," *Reading and Writing Quarterly, 10*: 5–19; M. Pressley, et al., "Beyond direct explanation: Transactional instruction of reading comprehension strategies," *Elementary School Journal, 92*: 513–555.

[67] KWL, an acronym for a graphic organizer technique in which students chart, before and after reading, what they *know*, what they *want* to know, and what they *learned* is an interesting phenomenon because while it has attracted a

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great deal of curricular attention in basals, articles for practitioners and staff development materials, it is hard to find much research on its instructional efficacy. See Donna Ogle, "The K-W-L: A Teaching Model that Develops Active Reading of Expository Text," *The Reading Teacher, 39*: 564–570.

[68] Isabel Beck and Margaret McKeown have spent several years, in collaboration with a network of teachers perfecting this engaging practice which focuses on how and why authors put text together the way they do. The net result of this routine is that students learn a great deal about how to read critically (what is the author trying to do to me as a reader?) and about author's craft (how do authors structure their ideas to achieve particular effects). See Beck, et al., *Questioning the Author: An Approach for Enhancing Student Engagement With Text* (Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 1997).

[69] Chall, in the 1991 edition of *Learning to Read*, documented this important increase in basal comprehension activities.

[70] Chall devotes a section to individualized reading in her 1967 description of alternatives to the basal (pp. 41–42), but has little to say about it as a serious alternative to basal, phonics, or linguistic approaches. In that same period, it is undoubtedly Jeanette Veatch who served as the most vocal spokesperson for individualized reading. She published professional textbooks describing how to implement the program in one's class (*Individualizing Your Reading Program*, [New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, (1959)]). In the middle 1960s, Random House published a "series" of literature books that were accompanied (in a pocket on the inside cover) by a set of vocabulary and comprehension activities that look remarkably like basal workbook pages. The Random House materials remind one of the currently popular computer program, Accelerated Reader, which is similarly designed to manage some assessment and skill activity to accompany trade books that children read on their own. S. A. Cohen, *Teach Them All to Read: Theory, Methods, and Materials for Teaching the Disadvantaged* (New York: Random House, 1969). For Accelerated Reader, see Keith J. Topping and Terry D. Paul, Computer-Assisted Assessment of Practice at Reading: A Large Scale Survey Using Accelerated Reader Data, *Reading and Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties* 15, no. 3 (July-September 1999): 213–231, and Publisher, *Accelerated Reader* (computer file), (Wisconsin Rapids, WI: Advantage Learning Systems, 1999).

[71] Richard C. Anderson, Elfrieda Hiebert, Judith Scott, and Ian Wilkinson, *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (Champaign, IL: Center for the Study of Reading: 1984). Anderson and his colleagues reported several studies documenting the impact of book reading on children's achievement gains.

[72] Nancie Atwell, *In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents*. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1987). While it is difficult to locate data to document these claims about Atwell's particular influence, the rise of literature in the middle school has been documented by changes in the teacher survey portion of the National Assessment of Educational Progress of Reading.

[73] Hoffman and his colleagues painstakingly documented these sorts of changes in the early '90s basals. James V. Hoffman, Sarah J. McCarthey, J. Abbott, C. Christian, L. Corman, M. Dressman, B. Elliot, D. Matherne, and D. Stahle, "So what's new in the "new" basals," *Journal of Reading Behavior, 26* (1994): 47–73.

[74] For a complete account of the Book Club movement, see *The Book Club Connection* by Susan I. McMahon and Taffy E. Raphael with Virginia Goatley and Laura Pardo (New York: Teachers College Press, 1997).

[75] Two classic books by Donald Graves, *Writing: Teachers and Students at Work* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1983) and *A Researcher Learns to Write* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1984), were influential in leading the process writing movement at the elementary level, as was Lucy Calkins' classic, *The Art of Teaching Writing* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1986).

[76] Perhaps the most complete current reference on integrated curriculum is a new chapter in the third volume of the *Handbook of Reading Research* by James R. Gavelek, Taffy E. Raphael, Sandra M. Biondo, and Danhua Wang, "Integrated Literacy Instruction," in *Handbook of Reading Research, Vol. 3*, eds., Michael L. Kamil, Peter Mosenthal, P. David Pearson, and Rebecca Barr (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, in press).

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[77] In Chapter 10 of Huey's 1908 book on reading, two such programs, one at Columbia and one at the University of Chicago, were described in rich detail. It is Dewey's insistence that pedagogy be grounded in the individual and collective experiences of learners that is typically cited when scholars invoke his name to support integrated curriculum.

[78] See Graves (1983) for an explication of his views on writing and Hansen (1987) for an account of how reading and writing support one another in an integrated language arts approach. I think I need to expand these, right? Or are they already in the footnotes?

[79] Frank Smith and Robert Tierney and P. David Pearson carried this metaphor to the extreme. All three used the reading "like a writer" metaphor in titles to papers in this period. Frank Smith, "Reading like a writer," *Language Arts, 60* (1983) 558–567; Robert J. Tierney and P. D. Pearson, "Toward a composing model of reading," *Language Arts, 60* (1983) 568–580; P. D. Pearson and Robert J. Tierney, "On becoming a thoughtful reader: Learning to read like a writer," eds., A. Purves & O. Niles, *Reading in the secondary school* (National Society for Studies in Education 83rd yearbook) (pp. 144–173). (Chicago: National Society for Studies in Education).

[80] Donald Holdaway, *The Foundations of Literacy*, summarizes this perspective and work.

[81] The notion of significance here is intended to capture its impact, not its validity. Even those who question its validity would have difficulty discounting its influence on practice.

[82] Patrick Shannon, *The Struggle to Continue* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann: 1990) provides a rich account of the curricular antecedents of whole language and other progressive and critical pedagogies. See also Yetta Goodman, "Roots of the Whole-language Movement," *Elementary School Journal, 90*: 113–127. The phrase, the child as curriculum informant, comes from Jerome Harste, Carolyn Burke, and Virginia Woodward, *Language Stories and Literacy Lessons*. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1984).

[83] One cannot possibly name all the important leaders of the whole language movement in the United States, but surely the list will be headed by Ken Goodman, Yetta Goodman, and Jerry Harste, all of whom wrote important works explicating whole language as a philosophical and curricular initiative.

[84] In the 3rd edition of *Learning to Read*, Chall makes the case that phonics instruction increased during the 1970s and began its decline in the middle 1980s at the time when comprehension became a dominant research and curricular issue. She also notes a further decline in phonics instruction in basals, based on the work of Hoffman et al "So What's New in the New Basals" in 1993. On this issue, one should also consult Kenneth G. Goodman, Patrick Shannon, Yvonne Freeman, and Sharon Murphy, *Report Card on Basal Readers*. (Katonah, NY: Richard C. Owen, 1988).

[85] My understanding of the primary focus of the opposition to basals is that whole language advocates regarded basals as a pernicious form of external control on teacher prerogative, one that would lead inevitably to the "de-skilling" of teachers. In 1988, several whole language advocates and supporters wrote a monograph documenting what they took to be these pernicious effects (Goodman, Freeman, Shannon, and Murphy, 1988). Does this need expanding or is it already in here?

[86] See Hoffman et al., "What's New in the New Basals?"

[87] Perhaps the most compelling sign of the backgrounding of skills was their systematic removal from the pupil books. In the middle and even late 1980s, basal companies featured skills lessons in the pupil books on the grounds that even teachers who chose not to use the workbooks would have to deal with skills that were right there in the student materials. By the early 90s, as I noted earlier, they were out of the student books.

[88] One must keep in mind that I am discussing changes in published materials, not necessarily changes in classroom practice. Whether teachers changed their actual classroom practices in a matter consistent with, or at least proportional to, the basal practices is difficult to determine given our lack of broad-based data on classroom practices. One suspects that the pendulum swings of actual classroom practice are never quite as wide as the swings in the rhetoric of policy or even the suggestions in published materials.

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[89] P. David Pearson, "*RT* Remembrance: The second 20 years," *The Reading Teacher, 45* (1992): 378–385. This analysis documents the increasingly dominant force of whole language, literature-based reading and process writing in the discourse of elementary reading and language arts instruction.

[90] Perhaps the best documentation for the resistance to, or at least a more critical acceptance of, whole language practices comes from studies of exemplary teachers who, it appears, never bought into whole language lock, stock, and barrel but instead chose judiciously those practices which helped them to develop rich, flexible, and balanced instructional portfolios. See Ruth Wharton-MacDonald, Michael Pressley, and J. M. Hampton, "Literacy instruction in nine first-grade classrooms: Teacher characteristics and student achievement," *The Elementary School Journal, 99* (1998): 101–128.

[91] A recent analysis by Martin and Hiebert of the basals adopted in the early 1990s in California suggests that the vocabulary load of many of these basals was so great that most first graders could gain access to them only if they were read to them by a teacher: Leigh Ann Martin and Elfrieda H. Hiebert, *Little Books and Phonics Texts: An Analysis of the New Alternatives to Basals* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement/University of Michigan, in press)

[92] In the late 1970s, Marie M. Clay coined the term *emergent literacy* to signal a break with traditional views of readiness in favor of a more gradual view of the shift from novice to expert reader. See Marie M. Clay, *Emergent reading behavior*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Auckland, Auckland, NZ (1966).

[93] In my own case, it was the disdain that whole language seemed to spawn regarding the explicit teaching of skills and strategies, especially those that promoted the meaning-making goals of the movement—comprehension and metacognitive strategies.

[94] Elfrieda H. Hiebert and Barbara M. Taylor, eds., *Getting Reading Right from the Start: Effective Early Literacy Interventions* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1994) describes several research-based interventions that balance skills instruction with authentic reading.

[95] Interestingly, a recent piece in *The Reading Teacher* makes exactly this point about the comprehension strategy instruction of the 1980s. See Sarah L. Dowhower, "Supporting a Strategic Stance in the Classroom: Comprehension Framework for Helping Teachers Help Students to be Strategic," *The Reading Teacher 52*(7), pp. 672–689.

[96] Smith, "Learning to Read like a Writer" makes just this point.

[97] For a compelling account of this "no text" phenomenon, watch for Ruth Schoenbach, Cyndy Greenleaf, Christine Cziko, and Lori Hurwitz, *Reading for Understanding in the Middle and High School* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, in press). In this account the staff developers and teachers of a middle school academic literacy course document the role of text in middle school as well as attempts to turn the tide.

[98] Similar arguments have been made for the reform movements in mathematics, i.e., that the reforms got out ahead of the professional knowledge base; the results of the reform movement in mathematics have also been similar to the fate of the whole language movement. See Thomas Good and J. Braden, *Reform in American Education: A Focus on Vouchers and Charters* (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum)

[99] In 1989, a special interest group with the apocryphal label of Balanced Reading Instruction was organized at the International Reading Association. The group was started to counteract what they considered the unchecked acceptance of whole language as *the* approach to use with any and all students and to send the alternate message that there is no necessary conflict between authentic activity (usually considered the province of whole language) and explicit instruction of skills and strategies (usually considered the province of curriculum-centered approaches). For elaborate accounts of balanced literacy instruction, see Ellen McIntyre and Michael Pressley, *Balanced Instruction: Strategies and Skills in Whole Language* (Boston, MA: Christopher-Gordon, 1996); Linda B. Gambrell, Lesley M. Morrow, Susan B. Neuman, and Michael Pressley, *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction*. (New York: Guilford Publications, 1999); P. David Pearson, "Reclaiming the Center," in *The First R: Every Child's Right to Read*, eds., Michael Graves, Paul van den Broek, and Barbara M. Taylor (New York: Teachers College Press, 1996).

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[100] Pearson details many of these concerns and arguments in "Reclaiming the Center."

[101] As early as 1965, Kenneth Goodman had popularized the use of miscues to gain insights into cognitive processes. The elaborate version of miscue analysis first appeared in Yetta Goodman and Carolyn Burke, *Reading Miscue Inventory* (New York: Macmillan, 1969).

[102] See Larry F. Guthrie and William S. Hall, "Ethnographic Approaches to Reading Research," and David Bloome and Judith Greene, "Directions in the Sociolinguistic Study of Reading," in *Handbook of Reading Research*, for an index of the rising momentum of qualitative research in the early 1980s.

[103] As a way of documenting this change, examine the *Handbook of Reading Research*, volumes I (1984) and II (1991). Volume II contains only two chapters that could be construed as relying on some sort of interpretive inquiry. Volume II has at least eight such chapters. For an account of these historical patterns in non-quantitative inquiry, see Marjorie Siegel and Susana L. Fernandez, "Critical Approaches," in *Handbook of Reading Research*, Vol. 3, in press).

[104] Starting in the mid 1980s and continuing until today, the pages of *Educational Researcher* began to publish accounts of the qualitative-quantitative divide. It is the best source to consult in understanding the terms of the debate.

[105] For an account of the evolution of this line of inquiry, consult Reid Lyon, "Research initiatives in learning disabilities: Contributions from scientists supported by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development," *Journal of Child Neurology, 10*, 120–126 (1995) and Reid Lyon and Vinita Chhaba, "The current state of science and the future of specific reading disability," *Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews, 2*, 2–9 (1996).

[106] The most highly touted pedagogical experiment supported by NICHD was published in 1998; Barbara R. Foorman, David J. Francis, Jack M. Fletcher, Christopher Schatschneider, and Paras Mehta, "The role of instruction in learning to read: Preventing reading failure in at-risk children," *Journal of Educational Psychology, 90* (1998) 37–55. The NICHD work in general and the Foorman et al piece in particular has been cited as exemplary in method and as supportive of a much more direct code emphasis, even in the popular press (e g , *Dallas Morning News*, May 12, 1998; *Houston Chronicle*; May 17, 1998; *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, August 5, 1998)

[107] Much, for example, is made in this new work of the inappropriateness of encouraging young readers to use context clues as a way of figuring out the pronunciations of unknown words. The data cited are eye-movement studies showing that adult readers appear to process each and every letter in the visual display on the page and, most likely, to then recode those visual symbols into a speech code prior to understanding.

[108] Richard Allington and Haley Woodside-Jiron, "Thirty Years of Research in Reading: When Is a Research Summary Not a Research Summary?" in Kenneth S. Goodman, *In Defense of Good Teaching* (York, ME: Stenhouse, 1998). These writers document the manner in which Bonnie Grossen's unpublished manuscript *30 years of research: What we now know about how children learn to read* (Santa Cruz, CA: The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning. Web document: http//www cftl org/30years/30years, 1997), which is an alleged summary of the research sponsored by NICHD, was used in several states as the basis for reading policy initiatives.

[109] Classic references attesting to the importance of phonemic awareness are Connie Juel, "Beginning Reading," *Handbook of Reading Research, Vol. 2*, edited by Rebecca Barr, Michael Kamil, Peter Mosenthal, and P. David Pearson. (New York: Longman, 1991): 759–788. and Adams, *Beginning to Read*. More recently, it has been documented in Snow, Burns, and Griffith, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*.

[110] See Connie Juel, "Beginning Reading."

[111] See Connie Juel, "Beginning Reading," and Adams, *Beginning to Read*.

[112] The work of Linda K. Clarke, "Invented versus traditional spelling in first graders' writings: Effects on learning to spell and read," *Research in the Teaching of English 22*(3) 281–309 and Pamela Winsor and P. David Pearson, *Children at-risk: Their phonemic awareness development in wholistic instruction* (Tech. Rep. No. 556). Urbana, IL:

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Center for the Study of Reading, University of Illinois) are most relevant on the issue of the various curricular routes to phonemic awareness development.

[113] One entire issue of *American Educator* was devoted to the phonics revival in 1995 (the Summer issue: Vol. 19, No 2). Authors of various pieces included those who would generally be regarded as leaders in moving phonics back onto center stage—Marilyn Adams, Isabel Beck, Connie Juel, and Louisa Moats, among others. A second issue was also devoted entirely to reading (Spring/Summer, 1998: Vol. 22, No. 1 and 2). The piece by Marilyn J. Adams and Maggie Bruck ("Resolving the Great Debate," *American Educator, 19* (1995), 7, 10–20.) is one of the clearest expositions of the modern phonics first position I can find.

[114] See Connie Juel, "Beginning Reading," in 1991, and Gough and Hillinger, 1980.

[115] One of the reasons for the continuation of the debate is that few people seek common ground. Researchers who come from the whole language tradition, were they to read Adams and Juel openly, would find much to agree with about in the common privileging of big books, writing, invented spelling, and the like. They would not even disagree with them about the critical role that phonemic awareness or knowledge of the cipher plays in early reading success. They would, however, disagree adamantly about the most appropriate instructional route to achieving early success; phonics knowledge and phonemic awareness are better viewed, they would argue, as the consequence of, rather than the cause of, success in authentic reading experiences.

[116] These and other reading policy matters have been well documented in a series of pieces in *Education Week* by Kathleen Manzo Kennedy (1997, 1998, 1999).

[117] Marilyn Adams (see *Beginning to Read* and Adams and Bruck, "Resolving the Great Debate") has consistently championed invented spelling.

[118] Allington and Jiron-Ironside (Richard Allington and Hallie Woodside-Jiron, (1998). Decodable text in beginning reading: Are mandates and policy based on research? *ERS Spectrum*, Spring, 3–11)have conducted a pretty thorough analysis of the genesis of this "research-based" policy and concluded that it all goes back to an incidental finding from a study by Juel and Roper-Schneider in 1983. They could find no direct experimental tests of the efficacy of decodable text.

[119] Learning First Alliance, *Every Child Reading (*Washington, DC: Learning First Alliance, 1999).

[120] The war metaphor comes up time and again when the debate is portrayed in the public press. See, for example, Art Levine, "The Great Debate Revisited," Atlantic Monthly, December 1994.

[121] Kathleen K. Manzo, "Study stresses role of early phonics instruction," *Education Week, 16* (24), March 12, 1997, pp. 1, 24–25, Kathleen K. Manzo, "New national panel faulted before it's formed, " *Education Week, 17* (23), 1998a, p. 7; and Kathleen K. Manzo, "NRC panel urges end to reading wars, " *Education Week, 17* (28), March 25, 1998, pp. 1, 18.

[122] Several studies are relevant here. First is the work of Wharton-McDonald and Pressley, cited earlier. Also important is the work of Pressley and Allington, 1998, and Taylor, Pearson, Clark, and Walpole, in press.

[123] See Pearson, DeStefano, and Garcia, 1998, for an account of the decrease in reliance on portfolio and performance assessment.

[124] An interesting aside in all of the political rhetoric has been the question of who is de-skilling teachers. As early as the 1970s, whole language advocates were arguing that canned programs and basal reader manuals were de-skilling teachers by providing them with preprogrammed routines for teaching. Recently, whole language has been accused of the de-skilling, by denying teachers access to technical knowledge needed to teach reading effectively (Elizabeth McPike, "Learning to Read: The School's First Mission," *American Educator* 19 (1995), 4.

[125] Written from a somewhat centrist whole language position, Regie Routman's *Literacy at the Crossroads*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996) provides a compelling account of the political and pedagogical issues we confront in the current debates.

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[126] The *balance* label comes with excess baggage. I use it only because it has gained currency in the field. Balance works for me as long as the metaphor of ecological balance, as in the balance of nature, is emphasized and the metaphor of the fulcrum balance beam, as in the scales of justice, is suppressed. The fulcrum, which achieves balance by equalizing the mass on each side of the scale, suggests a stand-off between skills and whole language—one for skills, one for whole language. By contrast, ecological balance suggests a symbiotic relationship among elements within a coordinated system. It is precisely this symbiotic potential of authentic activity and explicit instruction that I want to promote by using the term, *balance*.

[127] Adams and Bruck, "Resolving the Great Debate"; Marilyn Adams, *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning About Print* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990); Jack Fletcher and G. Reid Lyon, "Reading: A research based approach," in *What's Gone Wrong in America's Classrooms?*, ed., W. Evers (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press).

[128] See the earlier cited studies by Clarke and Winsor and Pearson, as well as the review of phonemic awareness in Adams, *Beginning to Read*.

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